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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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COLOMBINA.

BY ST JOHN LUCAS.

Many sojourners in Rome, and possibly a few tourists, are acquainted with a certain street near the Tiber called the Via delle Botteghe Oscure, and have lunched or dined in one or another of its tiny but excellent restaurants. Few will have troubled to enter the little church of Santa Lucia, which is opposite the Palazzo Caetani, for it has no particular architectural merit, and contains apparently no objects of interest. If, however, any wandering lover of the intricate byways of Rome gives himself the trouble to push back the greasy leather curtain at its portal and to stroll round its musty interior, he will, if he has very keen eyes, be rewarded with the vision of a highly ornate sarcophagus in the latest Baroque manner, whereon a redundant Latin inscription announces that within rest the bones of the Great, Most Ample, and Altogether Reverend Cardinal Pompilio Sarpedone; obiit Kal. Aug. MDCCLXXI.

This inscription, though remarkable for an opulence of detail in its catalogue of the late Cardinal's many virtues, is, I regret to inform the visitor, a lie from the first to the final word. His Eminence, alas! was not virtuous, and his body does not repose in the tomb. In 1845, when some structural alterations in the church rendered it necessary to move the sepulchre temporarily, the authorities, for reasons best known to themselves, gave orders that the coffin should be opened. No traces of a dead body were discovered inside it, but instead the astonished excavators beheld the stucco statue of a nymph, moulded in the most debased style of art, and of the kind that was common

in villa gardens during the eighteenth century.

No explanation of this staggering discovery was forthcoming. It had always been believed that Cardinal Sarpedone died of fever in his villa near Tivoli, whence his remains were in due course transported across the Campagna to Rome. The affair was kept as quiet as possible, but it is difficult to close the mouths of Italian workmen. A garbled version of it went round the quarter, and the nymph, who was allowed to remain in the sacristy (which also contained an execrable portrait of the late Cardinal) came to be regarded as the petrified figure of a highly influential female saint. The ecclesiastical authorities may have had some explanation of the marvel to offer, but they never offered it; and for many years the affair remained an apparently insoluble mystery. It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that a small black book, which had long lain in the recesses of a monastery near the Monte Celio, emerged, in company with a motley and tattered collection of printed devotional débris, into the outer world of a pamphlet stall in the Campo dei Fiori. The black book was a Breviary, at the end of which about thirty extra pages, originally blank, had been inserted, and these were covered with a crabbed and illegible script in faded-brown ink. An inscription on the title-page in the same hand showed that it had belonged to a Benedictine monk named Onofrio, and that he had acquired it in 1769. The blank pages at the end had evidently been intended for manuscript notes of a religious character, and the good Onofrio had made full use of them; but his pious labours did not appeal to the peculiar public that frequented the stall, and the book languished there for many months.

It might have languished until some sudden thunderstorm washed it for ever into pulp and oblivion; but one summer morning a young Englishman happened to be looking at the unconsidered trifles on the stall, and glanced through its pages. The young Englishman was trying to become a writer; also, he had read the prologue to 'The Ring and the Book,' and, as he dabbled in the collection of old manuscripts so far as a lean purse permitted, he had always envied Browning the great good fortune that had befallen him on that memorable June day in the Piazza San Lorenzo in Florence. Like the poet's "square old yellow book," the little Breviary was "part print, part manuscript," and had a quaint engraved title-page, where an exceedingly bulbous angel was depicted in the act of blowing away the mists of error and heresy with a kind of megaphone. The Englishman bought the book. It was not

so cheap as Browning's famous acquisition, but probably the poet possessed a wider experience of the arts of Italian vendors; probably, too, he presented a fiercer and more determined aspect than his shy young imitator. The latter put the book in his pocket, and, in the course of a long day's revel among the glories of Rome, so dazzlingly new to him then, he forgot it completely. That night, however, when he went up to his room, he rediscovered it, and after he had leant for some time from his window watching the moon that rose over the Janiculan, he sat down at his table and began to study it by the light of a couple of candles.

The printed pages did not detain him long. Their margins were annotated, but merely with references to certain theological works, so very soon he turned his attention to the manuscript. The first two or three pages contained more notes and several short prayers, all written in passable Latin. Evidently the monk Onofrio, like many of his Order, was a person of considerable erudition. After a while, however, he seemed to become tired of the learned language, and lapsed into distinctly colloquial vernacular. The young Englishman had learned Italian pretty thoroughly, but he was puzzled by many dialectical forms which were strange to him, and it was only after he had struggled with the dim brown script for some time that he realised it to have lost its theological character and to have become a rough and disjointed diary. It recorded, apparently, certain events which had happened during a period when the writer was living in a villa on the slope of the Sabine Hills, in the service of His Eminence the Cardinal Sarpedone.

The diary began with some conventional expressions of regret—written in a stilted and artificial manner — that its author was obliged to leave the peace and discipline of the cloister for the bustle and luxury which prevailed in the country residence of a Prince of the Church. Very soon the tone changed: there were some pungent references to individuals in the Cardinal's service, and some not over-complimentary allusions to the great man himself. For such criticism, no doubt, the Breviary of the monk, from which he would never be parted, was the safest receptacle. The young Englishman pored over the crabbed script, but he was often completely baffled. More and more frequently the monk relapsed into his tiresome dialect, and the student observed that whenever this happened, the word *Colombina* regularly occurred. But he could make nothing of the context.

His candles had almost burned out before he closed the book. He had really deciphered very little of the diary, but he had made out

enough to convince him that it would afford—to any one who could read it—a fascinating picture of the private life of a great and worldly ecclesiastic in the eighteenth century. The last few pages were almost entirely written in dialect, but it seemed to the perplexed reader that they hinted at, or even described, some sinister tragedy, some formidable intervention which had wrecked the society of the villa and had sent Onofrio back to his monastery. The manuscript ended with a series of Latin verses, which was clearly meant to be a form of exorcism against the Powers of Evil.

The young Englishman lay awake until dawn drifted like a grey veil over Rome, racking his brains in a futile attempt to remember any events with which the name of Pompilio Sarpedone had been associated. After he had risen he searched for it in various books of reference, but without result. The wind of oblivion had whirled away all records of the Cardinal: even his tomb seemed to be forgotten. The Englishman studied the manuscript once again while he drank his coffee; then he put it into his pocket and went off to a certain Italian friend of his who kept a book-shop in Via Capo le Case.

This was a learned man, a keen student of the dialects of his country, and one who possessed an intimate knowledge of out-of-the-way Roman history. At first, indeed, he contemplated the little volume with the slightly disparaging eye of a bookseller, but as soon as the Englishman mentioned the name of Pompilio Sarpedone he became interested. That evening, and every evening for a week, they worked together at the manuscript, and when they had elucidated the last obscure phrase the Italian took his friend to the church of Santa Lucia, and told him the story of the Cardinal's tomb and the stucco nymph.

This is the history which the Englishman reconstructed from the manuscript in the black Breviary, and afterwards wrote in his own language.

I.

One fine morning at the end of May 1771, when the daisies and poppies and love-in-a-mist were all aflower in the Campagna, the travelling carriage of Cardinal Pompilio Sarpedone left the city by the Porta San Lorenzo, rumbled over the cobbles past the basilica which Constantine founded and Galla Placidia adorned, and began to move easily along the Via Tiburtina. Besides the great man himself, it contained his domestic chaplain — an individual of somewhat rancid aspect, named Scarno,—his fat major-domo Tozzo, and the

monk Onofrio. Behind, in the boot, Giovambattista, the Cardinal's old body-servant, who had the reputation of knowing all the secrets of the Vatican, mounted guard over a large basket containing provisions and wine; for it was a habit of the Cardinal, when the weather was propitious, to temper the monotony of the journey with a substantial repast by the wayside.

Pompilio Sarpedone was a largely built man of about five-and-fifty. His face, in spite of his heavy blue jowl, had an expression of almost cherubic serenity, though on occasions you realised that he possessed a pair of suddenly formidable black eyes. His thick brown hair was only faintly flecked with grey, and in spite of his bulk, his vigour and activity were unabated. On this particular morning he was in a thoroughly amiable mood: he beamed whilst he blessed the *contadini* who knelt by the roadside when the carriage passed them; he hummed a gay air, and crowed like a child with pleasure when he felt the scented breeze from the hills. Altogether, he presented a marked contrast with the dour and saffron-visaged Onofrio, who sat stiffly upright, staring straight in front of him and telling his beads with bony hands long innocent of soap. The Cardinal's own hands were white and plump, and he contemplated those of Onofrio with disfavour.

"Eh! A pity!" said the Cardinal, for he had a trick of thinking aloud when that act was perfectly safe. "A pity that our excellent recluses cannot contrive to leave behind the austere, devout, yet perhaps occasionally over-zealous customs of the cloister. What say you, my Tozzo?" The obese major-domo snorted. He did not like Onofrio, and was annoyed that a monk should be permitted to ride in the carriage.

"What can one expect, Eminence?" he answered, with a cataclasmic shrug. "Moles and bats are blind in the daylight, they cannot distinguish. And persons without education——" The Cardinal made a gesture of half-indulgent reproval, and Tozzo subsided, muttering.

Onofrio did not appear to catch these observations. None the less, he had heard them, and his distaste for the major-domo greatly increased. Also, deep down in his heart lurked disapproval of the Cardinal, for the fame of certain episodes in the life of His Eminence had penetrated even to the cloister. A gleam came into his sunken eyes, and he fingered his beads rapidly. He was in the carriage of an Amplissimo Porporato, yet he felt that he had fallen into the hands of frivolous and ungodly men, and he looked forward with apprehension to his sojourn at the Villa Pompilio.

When they reached the bridge that crosses the Anio the sun was high. The Campagna shimmered in the noonday heat, and

the interior of the carriage became very warm. The Cardinal fanned a perspiring brow with a handkerchief that was bordered with exquisite Sienese lace, consulted a jewelled timepiece, and quoted Horace.

"Et præceps Anio, et Tiburni lucus, et uda
Mobilibus pomaria rivis,"

he murmured fondly. "Classic ground! Haunt of the nymphs and tutelary gods. Keep a sagacious eye open, my Tozzo, and when you perceive a shady grove or grot, be it that of the Arval Brothers or of the divine Egeria, let us descend and pour a libation."

This meant that His Eminence wanted his luncheon. The major-domo poked his bald head out of the carriage window and surveyed the landscape. Then he gave some instructions to the coachman.

"I remember," he said as he sat down again, "that just ahead there is a suitable spot—an antique ruin; a clump of shade-giving trees. Heaven grant that the wine be still cool."

"Amen, from the heart," responded the Cardinal piously.

A few moments later the carriage halted. The chaplain and the major-domo got out, and were preparing to assist the Cardinal, when they were pushed aside by a half-naked beggar, whose legs were swathed in ropes of straw. This creature, with his wild eyes and skinny arms, was not a pleasant apparition: he was extremely dirty, and his matted hair sadly needed the attentions of a barber; but the Cardinal regarded him with interest.

"A remarkable resemblance," said His Eminence. "If this worthy person were washed and brushed and clothed in comely raiment he would be exactly like my good brother Capogatto. But possibly," he added, as he held up his hand in the act of blessing the beggar—"possibly he belongs to the family." And he smiled as he thought of Cardinal Capogatto's pride in his immensely ancient and noble lineage. The beggar who resembled that great Prince did not appear to be satisfied with a mere benediction. He held out his frowsy conical hat, and whined a prayer for alms.

"Give him fourpence, my Scarno," said the Cardinal, "and request him to do us the favour of removing himself from the neighbourhood."

At that moment the monk looked up from the rosary and saw the beggar. He recognised him instantly, for he had often seen him before. The dirty mendicant was, he knew, no other than the devil himself. Onofrio shuddered, and began to mutter an exorcism. The devil looked at him and grinned; then he accepted his fourpence, bowed profoundly, and stumped away down the road towards Rome.

"You have a startled aspect, my dearest Onofrio," remarked the Cardinal. "But, of course,

till now you have never seen one of these wild men of the plain. They are quite harmless—simple children, whom Holy Church, in her wisdom and mercy, keeps intact from the snares of learning and wealth. Arcadians still! Oh, thrice and four times happy!" He blew kisses to the roof of the carriage, and waved his white fingers.

"Eminence," said Onofrio severely, "your eyes were blinded. That was no man; it was the Enemy in person. Well I know him, for I have practised, very humbly but with success—to Heaven be the glory!—the art of the exorcist. If Your Eminence had only recited the Grand Anathema——" Onofrio paused suddenly, realising that the Cardinal's brow had become dark as a Roman thunderstorm.

"*Accidente!*" cried the Cardinal. His voice was like the bark of a dog, and the monk trembled. The Cardinal began to clamber out of the carriage, muttering words which sounded like "fantasies of a woman with child." He recovered his good humour, however, when he saw the contents of the luncheon basket, which Giovambattista was in the act of unpacking.

"My good friend," he said, placing a hand on the monk's shoulder, "fasting and solitude have made you subject to delusions. An ample collation is the best exorcism in the world."

With this exorcism, at any rate, the Cardinal entirely disposed of his whiff of evil temper. Giovambattista produced a charcoal stove, and performed miracles with it: there were slices of melon, olives and tunny and a minestrone; omelettes were followed by grilled trout, *fritelle*, and very small birds wrapped in slices of broiled ham; galantine and cold partridges stuffed with truffles and an immense bowl of fruit concluded the feast. The wine was Burgundy, with the addition of a *fiaschone* of Frascati from a vineyard belonging to the Cardinal.

"A mere meal," said that personage at the end of the fifth course, "sufficient to allay the pangs of hunger. The simple life of the *contadino* is sweet, yet it is pleasant to think that to-night the amenities of civilisation will again be ours. At noon the sun, the sweet-smelling grass, the shade-bestowing tree; at night the banquet, song, laughter, and the dance. I am, I confess it, Onofrio, a citizen of the world, as well as a poor servant of the Church. The two rôles are less incompatible than such as you might imagine." He drank a vast draught of the Frascati.

Onofrio felt deeply depressed. The sudden appearance of the Enemy of Mankind and the atrocious levity of the Cardinal combined to fill his soul with the most disquieting apprehensions. He refused everything except the soup, and

contemplated the gastronomic feats of Tozzo and Scarno with a disapproving eye. If the Cardinal had failed to recognise the devil, he thought, that great man must be far gone on the road to perdition; but he had a carking suspicion that the Cardinal *had* recognised the fiend, and was keeping silence for ulterior purposes of his own.

II.

Pompilio Sarpedone was, as he had announced, a citizen of the world. He loved luxury and music and conversation with charming ladies, and perfumes and snuff. But the abiding passion of his life was his devotion to every kind of drama, and especially to the agreeable works of the Venetian advocate—the grand, the sage, the mellow, the inimitable Carlo Goldoni. Wherever the Cardinal travelled, an edition (in Venezia, MDCCLXI. Per Giambattista Pasquali. Con licenza de' superiori) of this author's works in sixteen volumes went with him. He had crossed the Apennines in mid-winter in order to witness the performance of 'Gustavo' at the Teatro di San Samuele in Venice, and he had visited Goldoni in his house on the Calle della Testa; more than all this, he had persuaded the dramatist to supervise a gala performance of 'La Sposa Persiana' in the Villa Pompilio—a memorable production, in which the stout Tozzo, much to his disgust, was compelled at the last moment to appear as one of four black eunuchs. It was even rumoured in Rome that Pompilio had actually appeared on the stage of his theatre at the villa in the title rôle of his own elegant rococo idyll, 'Il Pastor Amoroso,' when his rich baritone and his skilful lute-playing were greatly admired by the very select audience that was privileged to hear him. The romantic letters that he exchanged with that great patroness of the drama, the Duchessa Maria Vittoria Sorbelloni of Milan, are said to be still in existence; his Eminence signs himself Dafnide, the lady was Amarilli, and the affair is supposed to have annoyed Pope Clement XIII.

But though the Cardinal patronised the Arcadian form of drama as well as the more realistic creations of the great Carlo, his keenest enthusiasm was reserved for that humbler but genuinely dramatic *genre* which was in all probability derived from the Dionysiac festivals of Greece — the Comedy of Masks. This ancient diversion, the Cardinal observed with regret, was in danger of being superseded by the music dramas of Metastasio and Zeno; Pantaloon, Harlequin, Columbine, and the Bolognese Doctor were being driven off the boards by a de-

clamatory rabble of Aspasias and Zenobias and Alexanders. Even Goldoni had sneered at the old 'Commedia d' Arte'; Carlo Gozzi alone had been faithful to it, and had lampooned his rivals finely in the 'Three Oranges'; but of late he had abandoned the *genre* and had begun to imitate Calderon and de Molina—a perfidy which caused the judicious, and especially the Cardinal, to grieve. Pompilio feared that the Comedy of Masks would soon be relegated entirely to booths at fairs and to travelling shows, and it was his ambition to revive it in courtly circles. As every one knows, this form of comedy consists very largely of improvisation, and it was not too easy to find actors who were proficient in that art as well as in dancing and singing. The Cardinal's ambition was to possess a theatrical company of his own, but many difficulties had arisen: there had been a certain amount of opposition on the part of ecclesiastical rivals, and at present he had to be content with private performances on a very small scale by members of his own household. It was rumoured that the dilapidated countenance of the chaplain Scarno masked a rare comic talent; and certainly Tozzo had enjoyed a distinct success when he appeared in the rôle of fourth eunuch. The women, as usual, were a great source of trouble. It seemed almost impossible to find Columbinas and Doralices whose manners (not to mention morals) were adapted to the *entourage* of a Cardinal. Pompilio was not squeamish, but he disliked scandal, and there were plenty of tongues in Rome impatient to wag. He tried the experiment of giving the female rôles to some of his choristers, but it was not a success. If the boys were clever, they behaved badly, and too often they were exasperatingly stupid. The nieces of the Cardinal, alas! had not inherited his dramatic talent.

III.

The esurient Pompilio made a hearty meal, and poured, as he had intended, a full libation to the local deities. At the conclusion of the repast he was in a thoroughly benevolent humour, and affably discoursed with Scarno concerning certain superstitions of the country-folk, who believed that the mouldering ruins in the Agro Romano were the haunts of demons. Whilst he talked he thrummed the strings of a lute which lay across his knees.

The monk Onofrio did not take part in the discussion, which was a pity, for the subject was one in which he was an expert. In the course of his career as an exorcist he had encountered many famous and important evil spirits,

from the were-wolves that howled at night around the pyramid of Cestius, to the vast flaming-eyed, balloon-like ghost on the Monte Pincio, which he had identified as the soul of the late and never-to-be-regretted Emperor Nero. He could have imparted a quantity of out-of-the-way information. He knew, for example, that the names of Phidias and Praxiteles on the plinth of the Dioscuri of Monte Cavallo belonged to two great wizards who had wrought these statues by means of spells, and who now dwelt with the Enchanter Virgil in a tomb on the Palatine, working evil to men. He had watched the necromancers at their work by night in the Colosseum, and had seen blood-stained and terrible apparitions, and heard voices that whispered in demon language words that it is not lawful to repeat. He knew the five Major and the five-and-fifty Minor Incantations. But he refrained from imparting any of his knowledge to the Cardinal, although that personage and Scarno displayed, he thought, a perfectly childish ignorance of the supernatural.

The discussion died, and silence descended on the party. Pompilio reclined on his cushions, staring at the sky. At intervals he plucked the lute-strings, and hummed a fragment of song. Tozzo and Giovambattista slept peacefully under a tree a short distance away. Suddenly, from the road, there came the sound of a girl's voice singing one of the old Campagna tunes. So lightly it rose, that it seemed as if the very air of the country had become vocal, and had caught the wild sweetness of a bird's song. The Cardinal's eyes brightened; he leant forward and listened eagerly.

"Se il Papa mi donasse tutta Roma,
E mi dicesse: 'lascia andar chi t' ama,'
Io gli direi: 'di no, sacra Corona.'

Voglio pigliar marito a Pasqua Rosa,
E non mi curo se c' è niente in casa;
Quando c' è il marito, c' è ogni cosa."

The voice ceased abruptly when its owner came in sight of an unexpected audience. It belonged to a brown slip of a girl about sixteen years old, who was driving a goat and two kids along the highway. She was barefooted; her scanty garments hung in rags, and her hair was bleached by the sun, but her great eyes were beautiful, and she moved like a deer. She regarded the strangers without embarrassment, but there was a hint of suspicion in her face, and she did not appear to be impressed by the magnificent aspect of the Cardinal.

Pompilio, benevolent yet authoritative, beckoned to her, and she approached.

"If your heart is as sweet and soft as your voice, little one," he said, "the husband you sing of should be a happy man. What is your name?"

"Margherita, the daughter of Maria," answered the girl promptly. "But," she added, "they call me La Saltatrice."

"Ah, indeed!" said the Cardinal. He contemplated the girl silently for some moments. By this time Tozzo and Giovambattista had finished their siesta and joined the group.

"And where is the dwelling of the worthy Maria?" inquired the Cardinal, rubbing his hands.

The girl looked at him gravely. "She does not dwell anywhere, Excellency," she answered.

"Ha! How so?" cried Pompilio.

"She is dead," said the girl. The Cardinal made the Sign of the Cross.

"May her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace," he murmured. "And you, little one; where do you live?"

"With my aunt, La Scrignuta," replied the girl. "She beats me until I am black."

"Not a sympathetic character, I fear," commented Pompilio.

"She is a witch," said Margherita calmly.

As she uttered these words, the monk Onofrio, who had been piously occupied with his beads, looked up and gazed at her. She met his piercing scrutiny with a slightly defiant stare, and the far-seeing Onofrio made up his mind about her at once. She was a witch also, a *succuba*, and clearly the Evil One had sent her to meet the Cardinal. He began to whisper an exorcism, but as he was afraid of his patron he pretended to be telling his beads. Pompilio continued to interrogate the girl.

"You said that they call you the Saltatrice," he went on. "Can you dance?" He strummed a few bars on his lute. The girl's eyes gleamed, and her lips parted in an eager smile.

"Yes, indeed, Excellency," she answered. "It is my greatest pleasure."

The Cardinal purred approval. "Can you dance the *saltarello*?" he demanded.

The girl nodded. She began to move her feet nervously, and seemed about to break into a dance-measure. All her personality was transfigured. Suddenly the light went out of her face, and she shook her head almost petulantly. "I cannot dance it alone," she explained.

Pompilio looked disappointed, but smiled paternally. "I am afraid that none of us know the steps," he said, "unless, indeed, the good Onofrio has practised them during his vigils." The scandalised monk pretended not to hear this ribaldry. Pompilio again strummed the lute, and again the girl moved her feet rapidly. "You know other dances?" said the Cardinal.

The girl pointed to the kids which were cropping the herbage by the roadside. "I can dance with them," she said, and uttered a peculiar cry. Instantly the kids came running towards her. She listened to the lute for a moment in order to catch the rhythm;

then she broke into a slow and very graceful measure, waving her arms and snapping her fingers at the kids, which capered round her as she swayed and turned. It was the prettiest, most unstudied scene imaginable, and the Cardinal thoroughly appreciated it. Little by little he quickened the tune. The girl kept perfect time, and even the kids seemed to have an instinct for music. The mother-goat looked on with grave benevolence. Onofrio thought it awful.

At last the Cardinal ended with a great sweep of the strings, and the dancer sank easily to the ground, laughing with pleasure. Pompilio dropped the lute and rose swiftly.

"By the body and bones of great Dionysus!" he cried, "that was wonderful! The child is a born artist." A sudden thought seemed to strike him: he stared at the girl, who was playing with the kids; then he called Tozzo to his side and began to talk rapidly in a low voice. Tozzo, after listening for a short time, began to make deprecatory gestures; the Cardinal continued to speak, evidently with vehemence.

"I tell you, she can live with the wife of the gardener," he shouted suddenly. Tozzo made a gesture denoting resigned acquiescence, and Pompilio turned towards the girl.

"You say that La Scrignuta beats you exceedingly hard?" he asked her.

"Yes, Excellency," she answered. "Like a female devil from hell. And very often."

"How would you like," said the Cardinal, "to leave that unpleasing lady, and to live where you will have good food and beautiful clothes and sing and dance in a real theatre, and never be beaten any more?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders and smiled incredulously.

"Your Excellency is pleased to make fun of me," she answered with tremendous dignity. She stood up and looked straight in the eyes of the Cardinal.

"Magnificent! What a gesture!" murmured the latter to his chaplain. "Observe the poise of her head; notice her beautiful little feet. Giacinto will be enraptured by her." Giacinto was the ballet-master of the Cardinal's theatre. "I am in earnest, little one," he continued, addressing the girl. "I offer you employment, and a felicitous and strictly honourable existence in the house of a respected female. What do you think of it?"

The girl looked doubtful; then she smiled faintly.

"I should like to see the theatre," she said. "Every year I go to watch the actors at the *festa* of Grottaferrata. Perhaps your Excellency has also seen them? The *festa* is on the 25th of March. That is the day of the Annunciation," she added obligingly.

The Cardinal clapped his hands. "You shall not only

watch actors," he cried, "you shall yourself be an actress. You shall be our Colombina, and we will find you an Arlecchino who shall be worthy of you." He placed a finger on his forehead. "A beautiful idea!" he cried. "You shall no longer be Margherita the daughter of Maria; Colombina shall be your name—a lovely one, and appropriate. Will you come with us?"

The girl still hesitated. Then she nodded quickly.

"Yes," she answered, "I will come. But if the lady you speak of tries to beat me I shall run away."

The Cardinal uttered a shout of delight.

"*Benone!*" he cried. "To the carriage! Scarno, Tozzo, we must make room inside for this divine creature. Forward!" Then he saw that the divine creature had suddenly assumed a most obstinate expression. "What is it, my little one?" he asked tenderly.

Colombina frowned, and pointed to the goats.

"I must bring them. I cannot leave them alone," she said.

"By the garlands of Persephone!" cried the Cardinal, "you may bring all the flocks of the Campagna; bisons and buffaloes, oxen and rams, he-goats and she-goats, bringing forth a thousand-fold. To the carriage!"

Thus it came about that the inhabitants of Tivoli were favoured with the spectacle of Giovambattista, a dignified she-goat and two restless kids, sitting side by side in the boot of His Eminence's carriage. The inhabitants of Tivoli were not greatly astonished. They were accustomed to the Cardinal's little eccentricities.

Inside the carriage Pompilio babbled with delight, and tried to persuade Colombina to eat the fruit and other delicacies which remained over from luncheon. The girl was shy but not timid, though she occasionally glanced apprehensively at the sombre visage of the monk. Onofrio scowled angrily, for he was more than ever convinced that she was a *succuba* who had already cast her foul spell on the Cardinal. But his most valued anathema seemed to be useless against her, and this made him even more depressed. He yearned for his peaceful cell, and looked forward to the future with the grimmest foreboding.

IV.

A fortnight's residence at the Villa Pompilio was quite sufficient to justify the monk's anticipations. That abode of luxury, with its many-mirrored banqueting-hall, its marble atrium lined with statues of a distressing nudity, its terraces where peacocks walked and its magnificent gardens,

was wholly dedicated to worldly delights. Onofrio, who had been brought to the Villa in order to translate some Latin manuscripts, concealed himself as much as was possible in the library; but even there he was sadly harassed by the carnal aspect of the statuary, and he was often obliged to leave this dubious refuge to attend on the Cardinal.

But though the Villa possessed no attraction for Onofrio, there was another newcomer who appeared to appreciate it. The monk observed with pain that the young girl whom the Cardinal had gathered like a flower in the Campagna went freely in and out of the house, and laughed and sang in a loud and reprehensible manner. When he rebuked her she made grimaces at him, and danced away with fluttering skirts that revealed —oh, scandal!—her smart new silk stockings. For she was no longer barefooted and ragged, but was dressed in a fashion most unsuitable for the companion of the gardener's wife. Fortunately for Onofrio's peace of mind, she spent a great part of the day in the theatre with Giacinto the ballet-master—a fantastic little man with very plump calves, a monstrous wig, and a wizened brown face like a monkey's. In the evening, when they had all dined in the quiet garden, she would sing to them, whilst the Cardinal sipped a rare wine, and, musing, watched the dying sun-set beyond the stark black cypresses.

Beautiful cypresses of the Villa Pompilio! Divinely shaded gardens, where the cool streams babbled along mossy water-courses, and the air was heavy with the breath of jasmine and roses! But all these amenities were wasted on the sterile spirit of Onofrio. To him the precincts of the Villa, like the demon-haunted and fiery plains of the Campagna, were populous with evil ghosts. Even if he exorcised a couple of dozen of them before breakfast, they were all back again by the evening.

Onofrio was not troubled only by supernatural annoyances: the young Florindo, Giacinto's son, was a grievous thorn in his side. This youth, who was supposed to assist his father in managing the theatre, really devoted his days to singing, dancing, playing the pipe, snaring beccafichi, and generally making a nuisance of himself to every one. He possessed a faun-like grace of movement, and had a mischievous pointed face under a shock of black hair, and his chief diversion consisted in playing practical jokes on Onofrio. He stole the monk's sandals, and put birds' nests in his cowl and porcupines in his bed; and when Onofrio complained bitterly to the Cardinal, His Eminence merely laughed, and advised him to try some new form of exorcism. Onofrio seethed with internal fury, and vowed that he

would be even with Florindo, Colombina, and every one else who failed to respect his dignity.

Meanwhile, for all except Onofrio, the days passed happily at the Villa. The Cardinal put the finishing touches to his new comedy, and sent Giacinto to Rome to hunt up some capable actors; Scarno and Tozzo divided the day between slumber and the concoction of some mysterious liqueur; and Colombina increased almost miraculously in beauty and talent. Onofrio still regarded her as a *succuba*, and was gratified to notice that she was becoming friendly with Florindo. She would soon, he thought, drag that detestable youth to the infernal pit.

For the next fortnight the actors, Colombina and Florindo, were kept hard at work rehearsing the Cardinal's new comedy. The strangers were greatly impressed by the extraordinary ability of the girl, and lamented that they could not take her to join their own company. The Cardinal was in ecstasies over her talent. Colombina was a natural comic actress as well as an admirable dancer; and though her voice needed training, she sang her rustic songs, some of which the Cardinal had interpolated into his play, with great charm. Florindo accompanied her on his pipe.

Pompilio decided that he would invite no one to witness the first performance of his play except Cardinal Capogatto, who had retired for the summer to his residence near Frascati. That noble and holy man had always evinced a lively interest in the dramatic enterprises of his colleague, and he was an enthusiastic amateur of music. He was also a classical scholar, and desired to inspect Pompilio's new Latin manuscripts. A prudent person, the breath of scandal had never dimmed the polished surface of his reputation, and therefore Onofrio hoped that his presence at the Villa would act as a check on the fantastic behaviour of its owner. The monk was a capable exorcist but no prophet, or he would surely have foreseen the terrible developments in which he was about to be involved.

V.

Cardinal Capogatto was a very tall, thin, majestic personage, with a falcon face and bushy eyebrows. The latter ornaments rose considerably when Pompilio narrated the history of Colombina's abduction; but he uttered no criticisms, and when he had seen her and heard her sing, he expressed regret that he himself had not been given the chance of carrying her off.

On the evening of his arrival the two Cardinals dined together in the garden. They

were scholars and men of culture, appreciative of good wine. They were contemporaries and old friends. Conversation, therefore, was both intimate and gay. The cook, that fine artist, surpassed himself; and Florindo and Colombina, concealed, like the nightingales, in a shrubbery, made music appropriate to the place and the hour. At the end of the banquet Cardinal Capogatto announced that he felt completely happy.

The air in the garden was so warm and fragrant that the two great men were reluctant to go indoors. Lights were brought and set on the table, and Pompilio paraded his household before his friend. One member of it was discovered to be absent—the monk Onofrio. Florindo, who was sent to find him, reported that he was still at work in the library. Florindo was re-despatched to order the monk to attend the Cardinal at once, and to bring the Latin manuscripts.

Onofrio was annoyed at being disturbed, for he was in the act of composing a very fine exorcism. He rose, however, collected the manuscripts, and sailed away into the garden, with Florindo piping and dancing ludicrously behind him. The terrace on which the Cardinals were sitting was some distance from the library: while Onofrio stalked along he could see the lights of the banquet and the sheen of gold plate through the trees, and thought that they resembled the fires of Tophet. He quickened his pace in order to escape from the diabolical piping of Florindo, but as soon as he was near the dining-table he halted suddenly and uttered an exclamation of horror. Florindo danced past him and went towards the table, but the monk remained in the shadow, staring at the guest of Pompilio. Onofrio had seen him before; he recognised him as no other than the dirty peasant who had begged at the carriage door during the journey from Rome—recognised him, therefore, as the great Arch-Fiend.

Onofrio watched this fearful apparition for about a minute; then he pulled himself together and decided on immediate action. This was no time for half-measures: the Fiend had defeated him when they had met in the Campagna, but now he possessed a far more potent formula than the one which he had employed on that occasion. He bounded into the circle of light, rushed up to Cardinal Capogatto, pointed a minatory finger at His Eminence's aquiline nose, and began to shout the Grand Anathema.

For a moment the two Cardinals were speechless with astonishment. Capogatto, after he recovered from the first shock, suspected that the monk was another actor whom Pompilio had produced for his diversion; but when he heard the words of that terrible exorcism his brow darkened, and he rose

from his chair in offended majesty.

"Perhaps your Eminence will explain," he said to his host.

Pompilio was purple with fury. "He is a lunatic, a crazy pig of a monk!" he spluttered. He turned to the servants, who had come running to the table. "Take him away and tie him up," he cried, "and pack him off to his pig-sty at daybreak. Luigi! Anselmo! Body of God, will no one stop his mouth?"

The great Cardinal was blazing with wrath. The servants seized Onofrio, who continued to pour out his anathema. He broke loose from them and flung himself at Pompilio's feet.

"Hear me, Your Eminence," he implored. "There may still be time, in spite of all your sins, to escape from everlasting torment. That is no Cardinal, but the Enemy himself, the Evil One whom we met in the likeness of a beggar. You yourself observed the resemblance!" he concluded wildly, as the servants began to drag him away.

"I should have observed that you yourself were possessed by the fattest devil in hell," retorted the Cardinal. He smote the table with his fist so that all the glasses rang. "Take him away!" he thundered, and turned to apologise to his guest. Onofrio, still babbling his great formula, was dragged by the heels to the Villa and deposited in a damp cellar, where he poured forth exorcisms until his voice was too husky to rise above a whisper. At dawn he was packed into a wine-cart and trundled off to Rome. The two Cardinals solaced their startled nerves with another flask of *Est* from Montefiascone.

VI.

Onofrio returned to his monastery, where for a month he heard nothing concerning the unholy revels at the Villa. He occupied his leisure in perfecting the mighty exorcism which he had begun to employ against Cardinal Capogatto, and in continuing the account written in his Breviary of his sojourn in that abode of evil. Another monk was sent from the monastery to translate Pompilio's Latin manuscripts.

This good man, when he came back at the end of a month, brought news which seemed to Onofrio ominous in the highest degree. The three actors were still at the Villa. Colombina was no longer living with the gardener's wife, but was now a member of the household, and on several occasions she and Florindo had danced before His Eminence in a manner that was damnable to behold. The Cardinal, reported the monk, had lavished jewels and costly apparel upon her, and would caress her as they sat at meat to-

gether. He had even allowed her to wear his sacred ring on her profane thumb. Worse than all this, he had compelled the unhappy monk to play a comic part in some abominable drama, in the course of which he was heartily beaten with a bladder by Florindo. The monk asserted his conviction that the Cardinal was becoming insane; but Onofrio knew better, and worked harder than ever at his supreme exorcism.

A few nights later, in the solitude of his cell, he recited the whole formula, and came to the conclusion that it was thoroughly satisfactory. Of course it could not be expected to carry so far as the Villa; but Onofrio was conscious, as he uttered the concluding words, of a great hustle and bustle of demons escaping through the windows and up the chimneys of the monastery. He retired to his hard plank bed, feeling extremely pleased with himself.

At midnight, however, he awoke with the sense that he was not alone, and discovered, as soon as he opened his eyes, that his cell was illuminated with a deep red glow. Presently a figure materialised from the glow, and Onofrio beheld with some disgust the familiar shape of the Enemy of Mankind.

This Great Creature wore a wig, and was respectably dressed in black, with elegant lace ruffles at his wrists and throat. In spite of this disguise, he bore a remarkable resemblance to Cardinal Capogatto. The monk began to mutter his formula, and the visitor made an airy and deprecating gesture with his right hand.

"My dear," he said gently. "A moment only. I do not wish to disturb your holy vigil. *Apropos*, Onofrio, how extremely loudly you snore! I have good news for you, old friend,—news of our mutual benefactor the Cardinal. And an invitation."

"Avaunt, Fiend," said Onofrio, but rather mechanically, for he could not help feeling a twinge of curiosity. The devil smiled.

"Now, now!" he murmured. "You know that you want to hear. I have had the time of my eternity with the good Pompilio, and even you must admit that my appearance as Capogatto was a real stroke of humour. What a pity that your wonderful exorcism, or whatever you call it, missed fire!"

"It will not miss fire now," retorted the monk, sitting up in bed and glaring. "I give you two minutes to say what you have to say. At the end of that time I shall cast you head downwards beneath the deepest mud of the Lago di Bracciano. You remember what an ague you caught last time that happened."

"One minute will suffice," said the devil. "To-morrow is our great night of revel, and I wouldn't have you miss it

for the world. Wonderful events! A play, in which the Cardinal and the three trusty devils whom I sent to him will act—a comic play, my dear, about His Holiness the—— But hush! Then a banquet, with ortolans and quails—you know how you never could resist them, even in Lent,—and purple and golden wines, and that liquor from Cognac—I forget its name for the moment, but you tasted it when you went to France with the Nunzio, and you have never forgotten how it warmed your poor thin blood. The evening will conclude," continued the devil, "with a dance by the adorable, the exquisite Colombina, a handmaid of mine who does me credit; and, my dearest friend, this will be the *bonne bouche*. She will wear no clothes, Onofrio; absolutely none! Like Eve, you know, in those sadly improper carvings on your churches. Picture it to yourself, Onofrio: the white feet, the firm young breasts, the slender flanks, the alluring arms! Happy the man who beholds her; still more happy the monk!" He struck an attitude of rapture and clasped his hands on his heart. Onofrio regarded him scornfully.

"You might at least think of something new," he said. "That particular temptation is as old as the earth."

"And as eternally young as the spring," murmured the devil romantically. Onofrio snorted.

"You talk like a green-sick poet," he remarked. The devil looked at him with tenderly reproachful eyes.

"Rude as ever!" he sighed. "Then you refuse my invitation, Onofrio?"

"Of course I refuse it," answered Onofrio. "Go and try it on the Cappucini. There is a certain Brother Aloysius—but no matter. I shall now exorcise you."

The devil smiled sadly. "You need not trouble," he said. "Your lack of sympathy is more than I can bear." And he vanished.

Onofrio recomposed himself to slumber with a tranquil mind. But when he awoke he was tempted, not indeed by the allurements which the devil had suggested, but by the thought that he had not been able to test his magnificent anathema, and that here was an opportunity. It was his duty that morning to take doles of food to poor people who lived in the region of San Giovanni Laterano, and as soon as this charitable task was accomplished he went out by the Porta San Giovanni, bargained with a driver of a wine-cart to be conveyed to Tivoli, and reached that ancient town late in the afternoon.

Thence he walked to the Villa Pompilio. The ghostly spectacles that he observed on the way were not of a kind to reassure him. First of all the devil, in the likeness of Cardinal Capogatto, rose from Rome and came flying over

the Campagna at a great height; next, in a ruined precinct, he perceived Colombina and Florindo, who were dancing together to the sound of flutes, which were played by three sinister persons in rags whom he recognised as the comedians of the Cardinal; lastly, when he drew near to the Villa, a lurid crimson glow shone in the sky, and he heard demon voices calling from the darkening slopes of the hills. Just before he reached the end of his journey three swans with human faces and several hedgehogs who galloped on very long legs went swiftly past him. The sunset was fiery gold against a background of lead. The wind moaned eerily in the cypresses.

Onofrio concealed himself in a small ilex-grove not far from the gate of the Villa, and rested until darkness had completely fallen; then he went to a spot below the wall which bounded the garden, and stood there listening. No sound arose from the garden; the feast was evidently being held indoors. Onofrio climbed the wall with much difficulty, caused, as he knew, by the fact that many invisible evil spirits were tugging at his robe. He exorcised them all, however, and dropped into the garden abruptly. Inside the circuit of the wall the darkness was intense; but at length, when he had forced his way through a thick screen of oleander, he was able to see the lights of the Villa and to hear the sound of music. Advancing, he perceived that all the ground floor was brilliantly illuminated. The windows of the banqueting-hall were open, and revealed the long row of shining mirrors and the many Venetian candelabra that scintillated like great clusters of diamonds. Very cautiously he approached one of the windows, and as he did so the noise of the orchestra within grew louder; the drums throbbed, the violins wailed, and the trumpets blared in a deafening crescendo, so that Onofrio thought his brain would crack. Undismayed, he still advanced until he was able to look in at the window.

The first person whom he saw was Pompilio, though he did not recognise him at once, for the Cardinal was disguised and wore a mask. He was clothed in a court suit of yellow brocade sewn with diamonds, and an enormous cloak of purple silk, like the sail of some great galleon, flowed from his shoulders. Opposite him sat the alleged Cardinal Capogatto, dressed in garments exactly like those which Onofrio's nocturnal visitor had worn; and between them, at the long table which was resplendent with gold and silver plate and huge flagons, was ranged a rabble of strange guests: Arlecchino, Pantaleone, Brighella, and a Bolognese doctor with an enormous false nose. Colombina, in a white ballet skirt, was next to Pompilio; another person, whom

Onofrio recognised as Capogatto's private chaplain, was dressed as a clown; and Florindo was disguised as a young Arcadian shepherd. Besides these familiar people, there were many other guests, each of whom wore the head of some animal—a cat, a dog, a monkey, or a lizard. The banquet was nearly at an end, but they were still drinking wine, and the noise of their shouting and laughter rose even above the din of the music.

Onofrio stared at this dreadful revelry with appalled eyes. The animal-headed figures, he knew, were demons of the most powerful kind, and it would need all his art to exorcise them and their redoubtable leader simultaneously. He was about to begin a formula when Colombina rose from the table, went to an open space near Onofrio's window, and began to dance. Though she did not wear the aspect which had been foretold by the devil, the dance was a shocking spectacle for Onofrio, especially when Florindo joined her. It was, as the monk perceived only too clearly, a pantomime expressive of the most abandoned and carnal passion. The monk averted his face, and even as he did so a great shout rose in the hall. The movement had betrayed his presence to one of the guests.

Instantly several of them rushed to the window, which descended to the level of the ground, and, seizing Onofrio, dragged him into the banqueting-hall. There they pinched him, and beat him with bladders, and emptied a flask of wine over his head. Pompilio, purple as his cloak with anger, shouted for silence; then he ordered that the monk should be made to stand on the table. As soon as this was done the whole company danced round Onofrio and pelted him with fruit. The fruit was ripe, and did not hurt him greatly, though Florindo threw a number of nespole with deadly accuracy.

Pompilio made signs for the music to cease. As soon as it was silent there was a vivid flash of lightning that lit up every detail of the garden, and a long growl of thunder. The wind moaned in the trees, and the doors and shutters in the upper rooms of the Villa rattled noisily. Then all became quiet and Pompilio rose.

"Who dared to permit you to come here?" he asked Onofrio. Onofrio replied that no one knew he had come. As soon as he said this the Cardinal made a gesture of relief. "I am delighted to hear it," he said. "I may now inform you, my good Onofrio, that you will not depart hence alive. Your interesting and useful career ends to-night. The coffin will be convenient." For it was a whim of the Cardinal, as Onofrio knew, to keep a large and rather elegant coffin in the Villa. A *memento mori*, Pompilio was accustomed to explain, lent an additional zest to life, and you never knew

when such a possession might not come in handy. Onofrio felt easier in his mind. The Cardinal's threat to murder him banished his last scruples. He extended his right hand, and began to recite his grandest anathema.

He had scarcely uttered the first words when an extravagant frenzy seemed to overwhelm the guests. Some took hands and danced madly round him, shouting obscene phrases; some gesticulated horribly, and others tore their garments into shreds. There was another blaze of lightning and an appalling crash of thunder, but Onofrio was unperturbed, and proceeded with his formula. Pompilio leapt from his chair and joined the throng of dancers, tearing off his mask; his face was distorted and swollen, and he kicked and twitched like an epileptic. Colombina broke from the arms of the Bolognese doctor and stood on tiptoe in the centre of the room, spinning like a top; Onofrio could see red mice running in and out of her mouth. The Cardinal Capogatto swelled to monstrous size and, shouting terrible words, leapt madly, so that his head struck the candelabra; the other guests danced a wild farandole round the table, whilst Scarno and Tozzo and some servants stood in the doorway, quaking with terror. The air was lashed with the wings of invisible demons; Onofrio could feel them whirling past his face; but he continued the exorcism, and the more words he uttered, the faster grew the dance and the fiercer the frenzy of the dancers. Thunder roared from every quarter of the heavens, and the Villa rattled like a dice-box that is shaken. Onofrio, staggering on the table, cried out the last words of his formula, and the whole assembly rushed towards him with the red gleam of murder in their eyes. But before they could touch him, a flash of lightning seemed to pass horizontally through the hall, leaving him gasping and half-blinded; the lights went out, and as he fell on his knees he could hear the Cardinal and his guests rushing into the garden, squealing like swine. Outside, they danced across the terrace and away under the ilexes. Their voices grew fainter; there was one more huge clap of thunder; then the rain roared down in a cataract that smote the parched earth like a flail. Onofrio fell on his face among the dishes and flagons and lost consciousness.

VII.

But he had triumphed. It was, after all, no mean achievement, even for an advanced exorcist, to have defeated the Enemy himself, three superior devils, one powerful *succuba*,

one pagan faun (Florindo), and a host of minor hobgoblins, not to mention a Prince of the Church.

Pompilio, Colombina, and Florindo never appeared at the Villa again, and though at one time there were strange rumours that three persons who strongly resembled them had been seen performing comedies in the villages between Cumæ and Naples, we need have little doubt as to their real fate. As for Cardinal Capogatto, his body was found lying next morning in the garden of his villa. It was announced publicly that he had been struck by lightning, but privately it was hinted that when his servants attempted to move his body, it crumbled into dust. Every student of demonology knows what that means. A black business altogether.

There remains for explanation the problem of the nymph which was discovered in Pompilio's tomb. Onofrio's manuscript throws a certain light on this affair, though it is somewhat obscure. It seems that Tozzo and Scarno, who were naturally a little upset by the events of that fatal night, decided, since the Cardinal showed no signs of returning, to communicate a sworn statement of the whole matter to the highest ecclesiastical authorities in Rome. After some discussion, it was agreed that the best means of avoiding a scandal would be to announce the Cardinal's regretted demise and to hold a funeral service in his titular church. The coffin at the Villa proved useful, as Pompilio had prophesied; and presumably Scarno and Tozzo, judging it to be suspiciously light, weighted it with the nearest convenient object, which happened to be the nymph. Many miracles are said to have occurred amongst the fever-stricken *contadini* whilst the cortège was crossing the Campagna.

As for Onofrio, his notes cease with the funeral, and he vanishes from human knowledge into his monastery. Certain remarks at the end of his manuscript seem to indicate that he was ordered to become an oblate in a very severe monastic rule, and to abandon exorcism—a wise move on the part of the authorities, for certainly a monk who causes Most Ample Eminences to vanish into thin air is, however good his intentions, a public nuisance in Rome. *Corpo di Bacco!* It might be any one's turn next: yours, mine, or, especially, that of our saintly friend ——.

THE STRAFING OF L. Z. 76.

BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

MANY Zeppelins were destroyed by airmen during the Great War, and I believe I am correct in stating that in nearly every case the story of their destruction has very rightly been published, and the heroes who did their work so gallantly have been publicly eulogised.

I feel that an injustice has been done in the case of L. Z. 76, for, beyond a few very inaccurate statements, I have never seen a true account of the most courageous and gallant deed that I personally witnessed during the whole war—without exaggeration, one that moved every one that witnessed it to a state of mind bordering on hysteria.

I therefore offer the following short narrative to the public, the testimony of an eye-witness to the principal actor in a great adventure.

Zeppelin L. Z. 76 was well known to the Harwich Force, especially during the summer of 1918. It was a rare occurrence for the Harwich Force to be anywhere within a reasonable distance of the Heligoland Bight without being under observation of L. Z. 76.

Many were the stratagems to get her within gun-range, and many were the salvoes directed at her, but never with any success. The only occasion on which L. Z. 76 came within range she was hidden by heavy clouds, and the first intimation the Harwich Force had of her proximity was a perfect deluge of bombs. She failed to hit, and was distinctly unlucky, as many ships were spattered by splinters from bombs bursting alongside them. Evidently on this occasion L. Z. 76 obtained her point of vantage over the squadron by making use of the heavy detached clouds, and was probably directed by an observer suspended by a wire from, and many feet below, the Zeppelin, who supplied the commander with the necessary information.

This fine attack was enough to make us realise that L. Z. 76 was a foe worthy of our steel, and evidently commanded by a man who knew his job. I believe I am right in stating that his name was Captain Mattres, T.G.N., and that he commanded Germany's Zeppelin Fleet.

After many failures to destroy L. Z. 76, the conclusion arrived at was that the best chance would be by means of aircraft; but how to do it? It must be borne in mind that L. Z. 76's hunting-ground was 150 to 200 miles from Harwich. She was generally to be found in or near the Bight

of Heligoland, the greater part of which was tabooed to the Harwich Force on account of mines.

An aircraft capable of dealing with the problem and operating from Harwich would require a range of action of at least 500 miles, with climbing powers equal to those of a Zeppelin. It was necessary for the machine to be at the right spot at the right time, and with sufficient petrol remaining to carry out the operation. This difficulty alone eliminated all idea of flying a machine from our coast.

After much discussion a scheme was devised which showed great chances of success.

There happened to be in existence a special type of lighter designed to carry the large-type flying-boat. These lighters were capable of being towed on an even keel at a speed of at least 30 knots. A number of these lighters were at Felixstowe Air Station, and had been used for the above purpose on many occasions.

The idea was to fit a flying deck on one of these lighters, and so enable a "Camel" aeroplane, which was the most efficient single-seated "Fighter" in existence at that period, to be used.

The first design, in view of the importance of time, was to use two troughs, and to fit the aeroplane with skids instead of wheels. The designer was well aware that this method would not be so efficient as a flying-off deck, but time was so important that this risk was cheerfully taken.

There were at Yarmouth a number of the "Camel" type of aeroplane, and preliminary tests were carried out in order to devise a method of holding up the tail of the machine, and also to hold her securely on the lighter, both on her journey across the North Sea and also with her engine running. Volunteers were called for from the Scout Pilots for this unique operation. It is needless to say that every pilot in the group volunteered.

In due course the preparations were completed, and the first test was carried out by the designer, the gallant leader of airmen, Colonel Samson, Royal Air Force, late commander, Royal Navy.

A torpedo-boat destroyer towed the lighter at 30 knots, with an 18-fathom length of tow. Everything was very makeshift, but the great thing was to make a practical test to gain data. Unfortunately the attempt was a failure. The skids overran the troughs, and the chassis was torn off by one of the beams supporting the skids, resulting in the aeroplane failing to rise, and falling over the bows of the lighter, which passed completely over the "Camel." Colonel Samson nearly lost his life in this gallant effort, and had a hard tussle to get clear, imprisoned as he was upside down under water.

Although the attempt was a

failure, it was of great value, as it proved that—

(1) The aeroplane was capable of being towed at 30 knots on board the lighter.

(2) That with a properly-fitted deck there was every chance of the machine getting off.

(3) That a longer tow was necessary.

A deck was fitted to the lighter in a very short time by the Royal Air Force, assisted by the naval carpenters from the Harwich Force, and all preparations were made for the next trial.

However, events were at this time moving so fast that it was decided to eliminate the test, and that the first opportunity of carrying out the operation should be taken.

Accordingly, on the evening of the 10th of August 1918, the Harwich Force proceeded to sea to put the labour and ingenuity of the designers of this unique experiment to the supreme test.

The general scheme was to tow the lighter to a suitable position in the vicinity of the Heligoland Bight, to attract the Zeppelin's attention, and to entice her as near as was desirable to the lighter, and then to let loose the "Camel."

The machine was entrusted to Lieutenant Culley, a young but experienced officer of the Royal Air Force, barely 18½ years of age.

His orders were :—

(1) Don't get within five miles of the Zeppelin until you have got to his height.

(2) Attack from right ahead on opposite courses.

(3) Pass underneath, not above, the Zeppelin.

The machine was fitted with two Lewis guns, one double-charger of ammunition to each gun, each charger being loaded with a mixture of explosive and incendiary, and every tenth round being solid ammunition.

All went well. The weather was all that could be desired, and at dawn on the 11th August the Harwich Force arrived at the scene of operations. The sea was calm, and the visibility extreme. The destroyer with the lighter in tow was stationed in a position about 30 miles to the westward of the squadron.

The next item was to produce the quarry—an easy operation. A few calls on wireless telegraphy was known from previous experience to be a certain draw for aircraft of all descriptions from Borkum and Heligoland.

Within two hours L. Z. 76 appeared, and also many sea-planes; the latter were not interfered with, all attention being given to the Zeppelin.

It was now necessary to excite their curiosity, and accordingly the squadron fought a mimic action: salvoes were fired from the heavy guns, smoke-screens were made, the wireless telegraphy was worked frequently, and the squadron was manœuvred in various directions, gradually closing the

torpedo-boat destroyer with the lighter in tow.

Curiosity won the day, and L. Z. 76 followed. Keeping well out of gun-range until shortly before 9 A.M., it was considered that the time had arrived for launching our bird into space. The destroyer, then about 12 miles to the westward, was ordered to proceed, and at 9 A.M. precisely we saw that the first part of the enterprise —*i.e.*, the flying off the platform—had been successful.

Needless to say, that from now on the movements of the two principals of this drama were closely followed by every officer and man in the squadron who were not employed between decks.

I must here mention the men on the lighter, who worked under most perilous conditions.

If the reader will visualise the difficulty of standing on a deck with no supports or rails of any description, travelling at the rate of over 30 knots an hour, drenched in spray and oil, with an aeroplane whose engine roared at full speed striving to escape from its lashings, which must be released absolutely simultaneously, the reader will realise that the pilot was not the only man whose life was in danger. It is pleasing to know that the man who actually swung the "Camel's" propeller to start the engine received a well-deserved Air Force Medal for a gallant act under most difficult conditions, as the slightest slip on his part meant instant death by being cut to bits by the "Camel's" propeller.

The manœuvres of the squadron were continued in hopes of distracting the attention of the Zeppelin's crew from the "Camel," and were, as far as could be observed, completely successful.

The machine was clearly visible, rising rapidly for about forty minutes, and was then lost to view at a great height in a small bank of clouds. Shortly afterwards it was observed that the Zeppelin had altered course for "home"; the squadron immediately turned and followed.

The excitement was now intense, especially when at about 9.52 A.M. the Zeppelin was clearly seen to be rising as rapidly as possible, and it was evident to all observers that those on board the Zeppelin were aware of their danger.

Nothing could be seen of the "Camel," but at exactly 9.58 A.M. a small black speck appeared alongside the Zeppelin, which at this time was at least 30 miles from the squadron. This speck rapidly grew into a black cloud, and within a few seconds it was seen to fall rapidly, growing in size and intensity as it fell.

The deed was done.

For some seconds there was a dead silence amongst the thousands of spectators. Then their pent-up feelings were quickly relieved by such a scene of enthusiasm as can rarely have been seen—at any

rate afloat—during the war. Had any hostile submarine appeared at this moment I have no hesitation in stating that she could have torpedoed any ship in the Harwich Force with absolute impunity.

Order was quickly restored, the next item being to find and recover our gallant airman, and to pick him up before his machine sank, the floating capability of a "Camel" being *nil*. It is true that air-bags were fitted in the fusilage of the "Camel," but it is doubtful if they would have been of any practical value. The pilot's orders were to drop into the sea as close as possible to the destroyer towing the lighter.

The arrangements for picking up the pilot and machine, too, if possible, had been very carefully discussed beforehand.

The squadron at once proceeded to the position which had been previously arranged as a rendezvous. We expected to see the machine about three-quarters of an hour from the time the Zeppelin was destroyed; and knowing that the machine only carried petrol for about two hours, we were somewhat disturbed when two hours had elapsed without any sign of her. Still more so at two and a half hours. Every endeavour was made to attract the airman's attention: smoke-screens of the densest black smoke were made by all ships, and searchlights were flashed in every direction. The visibility was so good that we did not anticipate that the airman would have any difficulty in finding the squadron.

The minutes crawled by, until two and three-quarter hours had elapsed. We then feared that disaster had overtaken our gallant airman, when suddenly he appeared at no great distance from the squadron. The relief at seeing him safe was intense, and the reception he received as he circled round us (the squadron) before dropping into the sea actually alongside his lighter, was indescribable and unique in the annals of the war.

Both pilot and machine were quickly recovered, and in fact so rapidly was the salvage work done that the "Camel" actually flew again after being landed, and is now in the pavilion at Felixstowe on loan to the Town Council.

The object of the expedition having been successfully achieved, the squadron returned to Harwich.

It is interesting to note that the Zeppelin was destroyed at 9.58 A.M., and at 10.38 A.M. a wireless message was received from the Admiralty reporting a Zeppelin in the same position as that of our quarry at 9.49 A.M. The obvious answer was "My bird." This incident speaks very highly for the efficiency of the Naval Intelligence Department.

Lieutenant Culley's report was typical and to the point—no words were wasted:—

"8.58, flew from lighter to attack Zeppelin in sight

to eastward. Rose to 18,700 feet. Attacked Zeppelin from 300 feet below. Fired 7 rounds from No. 1 gun, which jammed, and a double charger from No. 2. Zeppelin burst into flames, and was destroyed. Returned to squadron, and landed on the water with one pint of petrol in tank."

Thus ended a most gallant enterprise, and all honour to Lieutenant Culley, who, single-handed in broad daylight, first flew his machine from a position which had never been achieved successfully before, and then, unaided, destroyed a Zeppelin at 18,700 feet—and this officer was not quite 18½ years of age. Lieutenant Culley stated that the temperature at 18,700 feet was so intense that he had the greatest difficulty in firing his guns.

If any schoolboy ever reads this story, I hope it will impress on his mind what the boys in the Great War did.

Lieutenant Culley was awarded the D.S.O., and I am sure that the thousands of witnesses of this most gallant and brilliant piece of work awarded him in their minds the highest of all personal awards for valour—the V.C.

A sequel to this episode was a signal from the flagship a few minutes after the return of the airman :—

"Flag—General. Attention is called to Hymn number 224, verse 7."

This considerably mystified everybody until a hymn-book was produced, and they read :—

"O happy band of pilgrims,
Look upward to the skies,
Where such a light affliction
Shall win so great a prize."

H. F.

A JOURNEY IN ARABIA.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL C. E. VICKERY, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.F.A.

THERE are many places on the Persian Gulf littoral which far surpass in the heat and humidity of their climates any that exist on the Red Sea; nevertheless Jeddah, the principal seaport of the Hedjaz, and the pilgrims' landing-place for Mecca, can during the summer months be very unpleasant and trying to the health. The thermometer never records any great heat, just a steady 90° to 93° Fahrenheit in the shade day and night, with a moist humidity that effectively prevents one from ever having a dry garment. There is also a peculiarly charming brand of prickly heat.

The Mahommedan festivals advance in their date from year to year owing to their calendar being computed on the lunar-month system; thus for the last year or two the pilgrim season has been in the summer, and it will be some time yet before the cycle of years brings it again into the winter. The unfortunate pilgrim lands exhausted from the damp heat of the Red Sea, and, after a few days at Jeddah, passes on to the dry furnace-like heat of Mecca. Built in a hollow at an altitude of a few hundred feet above the sea-level, girt round by bare and stony hills, the Holy City attracts and receives the full force of the Arabian sun; nor is it unusual for the thermometer to read in the shade 120° Fahrenheit.

It was on one of the days towards the end of summer, when the majority of the pilgrims had departed for the comfort and peace of their own countries, that the telephone bell rang in the office of the British Agency at Jeddah, and the Agent was summoned to the 'phone.

"His Majesty will speak to you," he heard the voice of an official say.

"May Allah bless him," was the hurried response for the benefit of the many gentlemen whose sole duty it was to listen to and report to the Royal Office all conversations over the telephone.

A few seconds and then his Majesty's voice: "Oh, my son, are you there?"

"Yes, your Majesty, our lord; may Allah prolong your life."

"How is your health, my son?"

"Praise be to Allah; may Allah bless your Majesty."

The conversation continued on these lines for a few minutes, and the Agent was wondering what was the real object of the call when the King again inquired after his health, and

seemed dissatisfied with the usual reply.

"Would it not be better with a change of air?"

The Agent began to see daylight, and readily agreed that it would. He was then given a most cordial invitation to visit Taif, which was instantly and gratefully accepted. Few Europeans have ever travelled in Arabia; of those that have, Burton and Doughty are the best known, which gave an added attraction to the thoughts of the visit. Taif is the summer resort of the Meccans, and distant about sixty miles from the city in a south-easterly direction. During the war an officer of the Indian Civil Service spent two days there (somewhat to the surprise and embarrassment of the King for certain reasons) when nearing the end of his gallant and romantic enterprise, which began at a town on the Persian Gulf and passed through Riad to end at Jeddah.

There were very few preparations to make for the journey, as it had been intimated that the party ought to travel as light as possible, and would be the guests of the King. The idea of the visit was far from popular with the local Bedouin Ashraf, or with the representatives of other powers. The former hated the idea of an infidel passing by the Holy City and through their country; while the latter suspected some sinister design on the part of perfidious Albion, and could not believe that a personal love of travel and adventure was the sole motive of the journey.

The Mayor of Jeddah provided camels for the escort and servants, and riding-mules were sent from the Royal stables. For some reason the civilised Arab, as opposed to the desert Arab, prefers mules to camels as a means of transport. A good mule properly ridden—and there is a great art in it, for no European can get the best out of a mule or donkey—will certainly walk five and a half miles an hour, and is a safe ride over stony and hilly country, where a camel can only go at a very slow pace. Over the desert on good sandy ground it is a very different matter, and a mule cannot live with a camel.

Shortly after midday, five days after the invitation had been given, the Agent and the doctor, with a few personal servants, set out through the Mecca gate, and rode forth on the pilgrim road across the plain to the distant hills. They were dressed in uniform, which was similar to that worn by many ex-Turkish officers now in the Hedjaz service, but wore the Bedouin head-dress—a large silk handkerchief over the top of the head with the ends flowing down over the neck and shoulders, kept in its place by thick silken cords round the temples and the back of the head.

The Sherif of the tribe,

through whose country the road passed, accompanied the party in person by order of the King. His presence was sufficient protection against any Bedouin marauders who might have had designs on the party. After passing over a flat sandy plain for six miles, the road continued through some low hills till it reached a col, on which was situated a small coffee-house, the first pilgrim halt. There was nothing of interest to note in the country, which was desolation itself: a few old Turkish forts commanded the road at various intervals to protect the caravans. After a short rest and a cup of tea, made with evil-tasting water brought in skins from Jeddah, the party moved on to Bahrah, the half-way house to Mecca. There were one or two wells at this place and a small *suk* (market) with several coffee-houses, all provided with *angareb* (native bedsteads) for the weary pilgrim to take his ease and drink his coffee. After a short halt the party moved on again, and some few miles out met the last pilgrim caravan from Mecca. We dismounted under their curious and intent gaze to watch them pass, surely the first British officers in uniform to stand a few miles from the gates of the Holy City and look on the slow passage of the faithful on their return from the pilgrimage. The camels presented a strange appearance with their cumbersome *shugdug* (a covered-in litter) on their backs, in which an *angareb* was placed. On these men could be seen sleeping peacefully, or seated cross-legged engaged in conversation, seemingly as much at ease as if they were in a house, while all the time the heavy transport camel lurched wearily on his way.

A mile or two further on, and after sunset, the party arrived at the royal farm, which had been indicated as the first sleeping-place. The "royal farm" sounded well on paper, but in fact there was not a building of any sort; and we congratulated ourselves heartily on our forethought in bringing camp-beds and chairs, till it was discovered that the camel-man, whose camel was carrying them, had elected to sleep at Bahrah, and was going to join us the following morning. The King's personal slave, a very fine specimen of a Sudanese, produced from his saddle-bag a cold fowl and some excellent Turkish sweets. Aided by the contents of a flask a tolerable meal was made, when the party lay down on the soft sand, and, wrapped in blankets, soon fell asleep. There was an amusing incident connected with the above-mentioned flask, for the Agent had confided to the Mayor of Jeddah—a very jovial person—that he was taking a flask of whisky with a few refills, but he would be very careful not to use it in public in order not to offend the Mahommedan sus-

ceptibilities of the people of Mecca who were his escort. The Mayor burst into a roar of laughter, and said, "Whose susceptibilities did you say?" "Those of the people of Mecca," was the reply. Another roar of laughter, and with the remark, "Yes; be careful of those," he went away. As the party was leaving Jeddah the Mayor came up to say good-bye, and leant forward to whisper in the Agent's ear: "Be careful about the susceptibilities of the people of Mecca," and was then assisted away in a paroxysm of helpless mirth by his two slaves.

There was a very heavy dew that night, and when the voice of the Sherif's *imam* woke us with the call to prayer shortly before sunrise, we rose drenched through and very stiff. A few minutes after sunrise we were dry, and the heat became intolerable, so we moved into the garden. This comprised a few fields of lucerne, with a grove of date-trees about five acres in extent, very pleasing and green to the eye in the midst of its arid surroundings. It was irrigated by a spring, from which canals brought and dispersed the water over the whole area under cultivation. There were several other springs in the neighbourhood, with shallow aqueducts of great age. Some were constructed of stone, and reported to be more than 600 years old; certainly the whole locality looked as if it might be of great potential value as a grain-producing area, if the Bedouin could be induced to work and private enterprise were encouraged and safeguarded. An hour after midday, quite the hottest hour of the day, the Sherif seemed anxious to continue the journey, so we saddled up and moved on, after taking the precaution of putting a couple of handkerchiefs underneath our headdress to get a little more protection from the sun.

A few miles from the farm we struck off north to skirt Mecca, through which town, of course, we were not allowed to pass, and the country became more mountainous. The road was the bed of a *wadi*. All these *wadis* run west to the sea from the mountain range which gives Hedjaz its name, since it is the watershed of the country (Arabic, Hedjaz, the divider). Winding in among the hills, the road gradually ascended, and became rough and stony. About 9 P.M. the party arrived at a large open plateau, where they insisted on halting for the night, much to the Sherif's disgust, who was very keen to push on. We had now reached a height above sea-level which made the climate not only bearable but pleasant. Next morning we started at sunrise, and met, a few miles on, a high official, who had come to meet us from Mecca. He gave us a very good breakfast, and afterwards we rode on to a lovely garden, where we lunched, in the Wadi Limun.

The road was still only the wadi bed, which wound its way through the mountains with an occasional open space like some gigantic amphitheatre, where there were gardens at short distances apart, watered by springs. When heavy rain falls, the wadi becomes a raging torrent for a few hours, and efforts at certain places are made by means of walls and dams to control the flood and irrigate a tract of country; but they are not very successful, as the flood, when it does come, is too strong.

In the afternoon we saddled up, and continued our march over a rough road. The hills rose steeply on either hand, and from the summit on the southern side a view of the Holy City was afforded.

That night we slept on the banks of the wadi in a very wild-looking spot. Our escort professed to be alarmed that the Bedouins living on the hills would attack us. All night long one of the slaves by turn kept guard, shouting continuously: "This is an important party. We are the King's relations here. Do not dare to attack us. We are very strong and well armed," and so forth.

Next morning the Agent was asked to note how well he had been protected, which tended to confirm his suspicion that the whole thing had been got up as a likely method of "touching" him for *bakshish*.

Moving on, the party ascended gradually till they arrived at an open plateau, where a Sherif of Taif met them. Not a living thing had been seen on the road except a few goats—not a gazelle, not a game bird, nothing but a few vultures. There were a few wells and springs in some of the wadis; otherwise the country was quite waterless.

The Sherif of Taif would have been a wonderfully handsome man, but his face was pitted with old smallpox scars. He gave us the usual coffee, and asked if we were prepared to come on after a few hours' rest. This we agreed to do. There were some old mud houses at this place, which provided sufficient protection from view and the sun to allow us to shave and bathe in comfort. About 2 P.M. we started on again to cross the Hedjaz range, for Taif lay some ten miles east of it. Although the mountain-side was bare and stony, and there was an absence of all animal life and vegetation, yet the surroundings were not without a certain grandeur. In many places we had to dismount, so rough and steep was the road; but after four hours of climbing we reached the summit, and were rewarded with a glorious view. Southwards stretched the great mountain range down to the Yemen, while eastwards we gazed on the rolling uplands, lightly wooded, of the Nejd, the country of Bin Saud.

We were now at a height of

some 5000 feet above sea-level, and as the sun slowly sank we were glad to put on woollen waistcoats and "British warms." A couple of hours along a beaten track, through light scrub and bush, brought us to the country villa of the Sherif of Taif. It was quite dark when we arrived, very cold and stiff. We were asked into the guest-chamber—a fine apartment, its floor covered with priceless Persian carpets, and round the walls cushions and pillows. Courteously our host turned to us, and embracing us on each cheek prayed Allah to bless us, and murmured the graceful compliment that we were now in our own home. For an hour we sat in that room drinking coffee and highly-sugared tea, and smoking, while we watched an Eastern scene that centuries have not changed. The Sherif had only been absent a day, but such is the etiquette of the East, that it behoved all to pay their respects to him on his safe return from a journey. To the threshold of the door from time to time came relatives, friends, and slaves. All removed their slippers and entered the room—the door was open—according to their station. The slaves came in quickly, bent with due humility and hastily kissed the two fingers extended to them, and as hastily withdrew. Dependants entered more leisurely, and kissed the back of the Sherif's hand; turning it over, they then kissed the part between the first finger and thumb, and withdrew quietly.

Friends came in, and for these the Sherif rose, showed a faint reluctance at having his hand kissed, and embraced them on one cheek with murmured salutations. For his relatives he rose, allowed his hand to be kissed with seeming reluctance, and then embraced them warmly on each cheek, straining them to his breast, and murmuring many and heartfelt wishes for their long life and happiness.

Late that night we dined, and then sought our sleeping-bags and blankets, for it was very cold.

Next morning we were woken by a special slave from the Emir, the King's son, who waited us at Taif. He greeted us in the name of his master, and brought us many kind wishes. The sun shone through the window into our room, but although two hours after sunrise, it was cold and the air delicious. We sent back to the Emir saying we should move off for our final stage of five miles into Taif at 10 A.M. After an excellent breakfast, accompanied by our host, we mounted our own horses, which had been led most of the way, and started off. Our escort and the cavalcade accompanying us had reached some proportions by this time, and we must have been a party of 150, mounted on Arab stallions, mares, camels, mules, and donkeys. Some of the

party were having an exceedingly rough ride.

Two miles from Taif we were met by the Emir Abdullah, the King's second son, a man below the medium height, with a frank and handsome face, and gifted with the most charming personality. He was escorted by a hundred mounted Bedouins. After a very cordial welcome and several presentations of local notables, we moved on *en masse*, and turning round the base of a low hill came on the walled town of Taif. Outside the walls were the King's palaces of Shubra. One had been built by his uncle, a few years before the war, while the other was of a later date.

The first view of them amazed us, for here, in the midst of a barren and stony desolation, with an arid plain on one side sloping towards the Nejd, and on the other a mountain range sombre from base to brow, stood two gleaming palaces, six stories in height, approached by marble steps.

Hastily dismounting at the threshold of the palace, we were met by Emir Ali, the King's eldest son. He led us with great cordiality into the council-chamber, a room richly furnished with wondrous carpets and broad divans.

Here for long we exchanged mutual compliments, and thanked our hosts for their gracious welcome and hospitality *en route*.

Noticing the telephone on the wall—strange incongruity in an Arabian town—the Agent asked leave to telephone to the King at Mecca. This was eagerly given, and the King was soon speaking on the 'phone. He would listen to no thanks, and only reiterated his pleasure in the honour that had been done him by our visit. However, he seemed delighted when Taif was compared to a town in Switzerland—in climate it certainly was very similar.

After this little conversation we were conducted by the Emir to the wing of the palace reserved for us.

Ascending to the third floor by a stone staircase, we were ushered through heavy wooden doors down a passage into an entrance-hall, and through the hall into a room of noble proportions, with a second room opening out from it. In this latter room were bedsteads. In the former there was a great oval-shaped table, and round the wall modern armchairs with washable chintz covers.

There were six deep embrasures, each raised two feet above the floor level and with a low settee, in which were placed the windows; from them one commanded a glorious view far away to the south and east. On the walls were great mirrors, set in mother-of-pearl frames. There were numerous small tables for coffee-cups and ash-trays.

Opening from one side of the passage between the outer door and inner hall was the

bathroom, which consisted of two rooms, an outer disrobing room and the actual bathroom. Pipes were laid from a cistern, so that a tap turned on water, which was heated by a wood fire made in a brick oven under the cistern. There was no bath. One washed from the tap, standing on a stone floor which sloped towards one corner, where it was drained off through another pipe.

Opening from the other side were two rooms. In one were kept the clay receptacles containing the drinking and washing water, and the other was a place of convenience, in which there was also a tap with water laid on from the cistern. Above were the kitchens, while below there were similar suites, less richly furnished, for the Agent's staff.

After inspecting our quarters and expressing suitable thanks, we were taken into the garden. If the palaces amazed us, the gardens bewildered us, for through a gate in a high mud wall one passed from a stony and sandy courtyard into a garden of wondrous beauty.

By the side of a marble-walled pool, in which goldfish swam idly to and fro, we stood and gazed on the rich profusion of that garden. Here were the gorgeous bougainvillea, fig-trees, pomegranate, orange, lemon and quince, rows of vines, peaches, apricots, with roses everywhere; while around us stood the Emirs in their Eastern garments, with gold daggers in their girdles, surrounded by slaves, jet black in colour, silent, immobile, inscrutable. The ripple of the water as it flowed down the canal that dispersed it over the garden, the blue and cloudless sky above, the rich perfume, completed a picture which evoked in wild confusion, chasing through the mind, thoughts and dreams of the Eastern days of old, when the hanging gardens of Babylon challenged the admiration of the world.

And then we passed out again through the gate in the lofty wall to an arid desolation.

Our host had arranged that we should live by ourselves, and our cook would get what meat, vegetables, fruit, and other necessaries he might require from the Emir's kitchens.

This suited us, as the Emirs had one principal meal a day, any time between 11 A.M. and 2 P.M., and a light supper.

For fourteen happy days we stayed at Taif, and a description of one day describes them all.

In the early morning after tea had been brought, and one was enjoying the unwonted luxury in Arabia of snuggling in one's sleeping-bag after sunrise, entered a slave of the Emir Abdullah, who presented the compliments and salutations of his master, for this Emir acted as our host. His brother's headquarters were really at Medina, and he was only on a visit to Taif.

After breakfast the Emir Ali was visited and saluted, a walk round the garden, and then the Agent would call on Emir Abdullah, who lived in the second and more modern palace. For a couple of hours all manner of subjects were discussed, from politics to more frivolous subjects, for the Emir was a broad-minded and highly-educated man. He was incidentally a very fine chess player. Perhaps a call would be made on some notable afterwards, and then lunch. After this meal an hour was spent reading, seated on one of the window seats in the sun enjoying the wonderful air. About 3.30 P.M. would come the daily invitation to ride with Emir Abdullah, and sometimes his brother accompanied us. Setting out a party of about a hundred strong, when clear of the town, the Bedouins gave displays of horsemanship, riding short races amongst themselves, and showing the perfect training of the horses in various ways.

Nearly every one was riding a mare, for the Arab considers a female, whether horse, camel, or mule, has far greater endurance than a male. The horses are generally sold.

The Emir himself never went out of a walk, so it was rather a dull affair, but various country villas were visited, all with wonderful gardens, although not as beautiful or as large as the Royal gardens. The party returned in time for the sunset prayer. The Emir always took great pride in showing us all his dispositions for the attack on Taif in 1916, when it was captured from the Turks. He was in command of the Arab army.

On our return to the palace we said good-night, and this ended the day. After the damp heat of Jeddah, no words can describe the glorious luxury of sleeping in blankets and feeling cold.

On one afternoon the Emir held a horse race. Flags were put up for the winning-post, and the course was about six furlongs over a smooth and level piece of sand. There were some thirty-five starters. Very few troubled about a saddle or even a bridle. Riding their horses bare-backed, they guided them with a stick, and encouraged them by their voice. An Arab horse is practically a domestic animal: he lives in the tent with his master.

It was a great race, won by a length by the Emir's bay mare Jewel. She was a filly, grandly proportioned, with a beautiful head, deep girth, and great quarters. The second, however, filled the eye more: a grand-looking grey mare over fifteen hands in height, which is extraordinary for an Arab, rather long in the back, but with a most beautiful action that seemed to eat up the ground. Her rider never could get her going, or else was too tactful to beat the Emir's favourite mare.

On another day the Sherif

of Taif dined us at his town residence inside the walls of Taif. It was a wonderful affair. For an hour we sat in a really beautiful room on carpets that made the tenth commandment seem a mockery, and then, a party of thirty, we sat down to dinner. There were some twenty courses, all exceedingly good once one had conquered one's dislike to the excessive amount of grease or native butter used. There were all sorts of dishes—roast sheep, pilaff of chickens, hashed meat, curry, and many others—but about half-way through there was an amazing quince trifle which equalled anything that a European chef could produce. If we had not been in a Mahommedan country, a few leagues only from the Holy City, we could have sworn there was just a taste of brandy in that trifle; but how could it have been? However, it was decided to refer the matter to the jovial Mayor of Jeddah for his opinion on our return.

The Agent had to hurry back to Jeddah, so after fourteen pleasant days we said good-bye to Emir Ali, and, accompanied by the Emir Abdullah, set out on our return journey by a different route. We travelled by the Kura Pass, twelve miles from Taif. On the evening of the day of our departure we stopped for the night at a small farmer's house, near the summit of the pass. The Emir Ali had given the Agent and his party a Bedouin coat each before leaving as a present. They are made of pure wool, and defy the cold and wind. On this night they were indeed welcome.

The house at which we slept was built of stones, all fitted together without the aid of mortar, and with a flat roof polished with cow dung. It was wind and rain-proof, but we were very glad of those coats.

There was a great deal of cultivation, all rain crops, and the mountain was covered with a species of small Scots fir, while many herbs, such as mint and balsam, grew in profusion. Our road had passed through several villages, and was the same track along which more than twelve centuries ago the people of Taif had stoned the prophet Mahommed on his return from his fruitless errand of proselytism. Their descendants now gazed at the prophet's descendant passing by with an infidel in his train.

We rose early next morning and dressed in the bitter cold, for our altitude was now 9000 feet above sea-level. It was some time before the animals could be got to move, but eventually we got off, and in a quarter of an hour arrived at the edge of the mountain, from where the road fell precipitously 5000 feet to the plain, and then gradually sank to the sea-level.

What a view spread itself before our eyes! Far distant the Red Sea was clearly visible,

while below us the country lay in outline as from an aeroplane, the hills guarding the Holy City a few miles to the west bathed in an eastern sun. We stood for a few minutes lost in admiration of that superb view; then turning to our Royal host we bade him adieu, with many expressions of grateful thanks, and began the precipitous descent of that rugged pass. One likes to think of the last view of that kindly gentleman, our host, as he stood at the head of the pass to watch his guests out of sight. Born of the tribe and house of the Prophet, had his lot been cast in some fairer atmosphere he might have risen to the seats of the mighty. In appearance he resembled bluff King Hal, and in many other respects he was not dissimilar in character. Generous and broad-minded, clever and unselfish, he stood far above the many princes of Arabia.

It took us some hours to reach the bottom of the pass. In many places one wondered how the animals stood up; while in others the remains of the paved *chaussée*, built by Mahomet Ali nearly a century ago, afforded, by reason of its slippery surface, an even more precarious foothold. The great Egyptian potentate had constructed the paved road up the pass to deal with the Wahabis, but time had worn away the greater part, and left the remainder more an obstacle than a help.

A short rest at the foot of the pass and the party moved on, accompanied by the Sherif of Taif. Towards sunset we passed the Mount of Ararat (the mountain of knowledge), so called because Arab tradition has it that Adam met again Eve at this mountain. After falling out of Paradise, Eve fell in Arabia and Adam in Ceylon. Two hundred years passed by before the angel Gabriel took compassion on them, and transported Adam to Arabia, where he met Eve at the above-mentioned mountain. The tomb of Eve is to-day at Jeddah, which is an Arabic word signifying "ancestress," or "grandmother."

At this mountain the high official from Mecca took leave, and went on direct to the Holy City, while we moved in a north-westerly direction to avoid it. Just before it was dark we passed close to Mt. el Nur, or mountain of the light, for it was here in solitude that the great Prophet passed many days in silent meditation before he proclaimed to Arabia his mission.

It was after nine before we halted that night at a well on an open plateau with a full moon. The night was still and clear, around us the mountains, and like some silvery streak the wadi bed stretched away towards the Holy City, nine miles distant. What memories, what visions on that night and in those surroundings were conjured up before our eyes!—the last journey of

the Prophet from Medina, the submission of the Holy City and its conversion to Islamism; and while we stood and dreamed, a few Bedouin came down stealthily to the well and filled their skins in the self-same way as their ancestors had filled them for countless years beyond the reckoning of man.

Next morning we woke to find ourselves a few yards only from the pillars that marked the boundaries of the sacred circle around Mecca, where pilgrims must assume the pilgrim robe, and infidels may not pass.

The Sherif of Taif now took leave of us and went on into Mecca, since the Sherif of the Harb, who had escorted us from Jeddah, was waiting here to conduct us back again. We pushed on all that day back over our old road, and slept near the Royal farm close to Bahrah. We learnt on the following morning as we breakfasted at the farm that the King had just passed through on his way to Jeddah.

At midday we set out, experiencing again the torrid heat of a noonday sun, and rode on through Bahrah till we reached at sunset the little col some ten miles east of Jeddah, where was the pilgrims' coffee-house. We rested awhile here before setting out on our final stage. It was nearly ten before, close to Jeddah, we met a party who came to offer the King's greeting and prayer for our safe return. We thanked them, and they joined us and rode on with our small cavalcade. A few minutes afterwards we passed under the portals of the Mecca gate to the clash of arms as the guard turned out and the barbaric rendering of the sweetest tune on earth. God save him!

THE PEREGRINATIONS OF AN OFFICER'S WIFE.

I.

"I AM ready, O Lord, when thou callest, but let me rest a little first."

I cannot remember where, or in what country, or on whose tomb, I saw the above epitaph, but I am absolutely certain it must mark the grave of some officer's wife. They lie, at rest, in many lands, and no one else could have thought of an inscription so completely appropriate, or could have felt so very tired of moving.

My idea of heaven is a place where there is no packing or unpacking. Nothing else, no other description of a future life, would appeal to me at all. No packing, no passports, no inoculations necessary—and to stay there for ever, that would be heaven indeed. Wherever I go I want to stay and never move again. For fourteen years I have wandered about Europe, Asia, and Africa. Another four or five years, I suppose, and then a small house, a small motor, and a still smaller income. Will it be possible to find a place not already filled to overflowing with retired generals and colonels. Even in France the pensioned of the British Army have settled in thousands, monopolising every golf links, and scowling at the unfortunate French inhabitants, and wondering quite audibly, I fear, why those "d—d foreigners" ever started golf.

I cannot imagine what happens to the retired officers of the French Army. Do they die off like flies in winter at the end of their service? Or is it that they in their turn, driven out of their own country by the hosts of the British Army, have invaded another land which I have not yet discovered?

I have seen many retired German generals and colonels. There is a large colony, headed by Sixt von Arnim, living on the banks of the Rhine, not far from Cologne, fierce-looking old men, who daily take their little dachshunds for walks, the said little dachshunds being severely kicked, or roughly pulled along, when they want to stop or bark, or, worse still, wag their little tails at the English woman on her horse, an inoffensive member of a most inoffensive Army of Occupation. Poor little Hun dogs. I would not like to be even the dog of a retired and defeated Prussian general.

I think when we leave the Army, or the Army leaves us, we shall withdraw to a spot I know of in the Western Highlands, twenty-seven miles from a railway station, our only neighbours two magnates who, both having made enor-

mous fortunes in the war, will not bother themselves unduly with the poor officer at their gates. I shall fish in the river that runs beneath the windows of the house of my dreams. In spirit I have heard the sound of that river in many lands, and some day I shall hear it again in reality.

Did I say fish?—nay, at first I shall not even fish, but, surrounded by a horde of dogs of all shapes, sizes, and breeds, I shall just sit and look and listen to the river. The dogs can hunt rats, as that entails no exertion on my part, and but little on the part of the rats.

"The autumn hues of the river-banks are the river-banks' affair," is, I think, a Chinese proverb, and one which aptly describes my feelings. I do not care what happens to anything, be it people or river-banks, as long as I can have peace. So I feel now, though perhaps when I am free I shall find it impossible to stay in one place. It is possible, even probable, that I may not be able to keep from packing. Moving and packing have become horrible habits, a part of my life.

Sometimes when fate has been kind, and we have been stationed for a few weeks—once it was a few months—in a pleasant place, I have had a maid; but, alas! we have always moved on so quickly, and one move as done in the Army is usually enough for a maid. They cannot endure the perpetual changing and packing. I cannot endure it either, but I have to try. They do not like hotel life, or the North of England, Germany or Ireland, as the case may be; most likely I do not like it either. But, then, I do not belong to a class that can choose where it will live or not live. I merely go where I am sent, and am only thankful when the method of my going is not too unpleasant or abrupt, and if I find a moderately sound roof over my head at the other end. I struggled between laughter and annoyance when a maid I took out to India—second-class, it is true, but at vast expense—accused me of having taken her out steerage. She had some grounds for thinking this, I must own; but had the heads of the august company on whose smallest and most uncomfortable ship we were kindly permitted to travel, heard her remarks, I tremble to think what would have happened. But more of this company anon. It is not a subject that any one who has travelled much to the East can keep off long; neither, unfortunately, can one keep off their boats.

I was very young and optimistic when I married, and did not take life calmly, and I could not understand life in the Army. I am not sure that I understand it now, but I am acquiring, if I have not completely acquired, that placid disposition and that total lack of imagination so necessary

in an officer's wife. I used to worry and to make plans months ahead. This, of course, spells lunacy in a life where it is impossible to say where you will be on the same day the following week; where your whole life is liable to be altered at twenty-four hours' notice; when every arrangement—week-end to a wedding—is made with the proviso leave permitting; and nowadays, with Sinn Fein and strikes and Poles and plebiscites and all the other horrors of peace, how seldom if ever does leave permit.

Malta was my first station, and I started out so light-heartedly to join my husband. I do not seem to have done much else since. My life seems to have been spent in joining or endeavouring to join him, faint but persevering, except for occasional intervals, when positively panting from my exertions to keep pace with his rapid movements from Asia to Europe and back again, I have retired from the unequal struggle and lived the life of a civilian at large. My first journey to Malta had its pleasant moments. I love seeing new places, but oh! the discomfort involved in doing so. The boat from Marseilles to Malta, a French one, was a horrid revelation. I shared my cabin with a French woman and two babies and a host of lesser creatures. I woke up in the night to find these last advancing methodically to attack me, long columns in single file, all eyes and ages. I aroused my companion with a scream. "Mais c'est souvent comme ca dans les pays chaud," was her sole comment. I rushed to the bathroom, but the bath was full of grapes, so, hastily dressing, I fled on deck. There I forgathered with a gentleman travelling in whisky, but who, fortunately for me, had large quantities of Keating's Powder. He gallantly came to my rescue; without his kindly aid I could never have faced my husband. The bride of a month before to arrive one mass of bites! As well as lack of imagination, nerves of iron, perfect health, and unfailing optimism, one other qualification is essential in an officer's wife, and that is a skin like leather, impervious to the bites of all the odd insects it is our fate so frequently to meet. Some people remember places for their beauty, others frankly own that it is the food they remember best—the prawn curry at the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, for instance. I also have pleasant recollections of those prawns, but it is the mosquitoes I remember better. Malta will be for ever associated in my mind with sand-flies; India and Sicily, like Ceylon, with mosquitoes, known to the soldiers for their swiftness, size, and vigour in attack as Handley Pages. Another beauty spot of the world is to me merely a haunt of creatures never mentioned by nice writers. Marseilles is the home of a sort

of winged ant, keen as a hawk, and which bites like a tiger. For, alas! everything that flies, hops, or crawls makes its way to me. The dear old French captain of the horrid old French boat completed my discomfiture on this occasion. His parting words in Malta harbour were, "Au revoir, madam; beaucoup de chance et beaucoup des enfants." Fortunately for "les enfants," the latter part of his good wishes have not been fulfilled. A friend of ours, also a soldier, always declared that he was never sure how many children he had. I took my child to see them one day. He came into the nursery, and carefully counted the children. Then, turning to his wife, he said severely, "My dear, I am certain you told me we had only four children, and there are five here." I am not surprised at any soldier getting a little misled. They are too much away to really know all their babies by sight.

Malta was amusing for a time, and full of admirals; but as soon as I had unpacked and got to know the admirals we moved on to India. Just before we left, Winston Churchill came out on a visit to the island. It is always difficult to keep pace with his ministerial positions, but I think he must have had something to do with the Navy then—at least, there was great activity on the part of the Navy—and all the young officers on the cruiser which was deputed to take him about were convinced that their fortunes would be made did he but take a fancy to them; while the Army, on the other hand, showed complete apathy.

Years later, when I met Mr Churchill again, it was on the Rhine. It was then the Army's turn, and miles of red carpet were laid down, and we spread ourselves with the carpet in our efforts to please him. My share was a long, hot, and boring afternoon on the river, when, dressed in my best, I sat limply on the deck, while the hero of the occasion slept peacefully at the other end of the boat. I may be libelling him, but in spite of these efforts, it was suspiciously soon after his visit that the order came out: "No ladies in Government cars; no ladies on Government horses."

At Malta I had my first experience of seniority—a horrid awakening. Just before we left the island an order was issued that only the four senior dogs of the regiment would be allowed to embark on the transport that was to take us to India. My beloved Boger, a Maltese bulldog, named after an officer she closely resembled, must be left behind with many, many others. This awful news was broken to me by our soldier servant, known as the Ogre, otherwise Private Henshaw. He was a taciturn person, devoted to my husband. "This is a rum go, sir, you getting married," was his only comment on his master marry-

ing me. At first he treated me with distant civility. But we had been drawn together by our mutual love of Boger. I was in my room, and Boger lay on the bed, covered with a newspaper to keep the flies off, when the Ogre walked gloomily in and sat down on the bed beside her. Obviously this was not the time for ceremony, so I sat on the bed too. We discussed ways and means of evading the order. We counted up the senior officers who had dogs. No hope there. My husband, and therefore Boger, was at least ninth on the list.

In the end the Ogre opined I had best leave it to him. I had great faith in him, as I have in every British soldier. I said it might have been worse: it might well have been that only the four senior wives in the regiment were to go. But possibly in his eyes this would not have been such a calamity. I am sure he would more readily have left me behind than Boger.

The fatal day arrived. The three dogs belonging to the three senior officers of the regiment and the band dog—this last as a concession to the men—were officially and openly marched on board; but the next day, when well out to sea, at least forty others turned up from all corners of the ship, and among these Boger. The Colonel could not very well have them thrown overboard, though I am sure he longed to, so they proceeded in triumph to India. I asked the Ogre no questions. "Those that asks no questions don't get told no lies" is a very useful thing to remember when dealing with soldiers. Dear Ogre, he is now driving a tram in Manchester, and if I ever go to Manchester again, nothing would induce me to go on any tram but his. That was a dreadful voyage. We had the lunatics' cabin,—a small dark spot, with heavily-barred portholes looking out on the troop deck. The men there used to hoist themselves up by the bars and sit in the porthole. I spent most of my time poking them down from inside the cabin. Their language when they received a dig in the back was awful; doubtless they thought it was a lunatic assaulting them. To add to the gloom, just off Aden the baby daughter of an officer died, and was buried at sea a few hours later. I shall never forget the funeral; the extraordinary silence and hush as the engines stopped. The great ship lay quiet and still on the oily swell, the only sound the lapping of the water against her sides. The regiment paraded; the Padre read the beautiful words of the burial service for those who die at sea. The buglers sounded the "Last Post," the tiny coffin was lowered into the shark-infested sea, and the ship went on, leaving behind "Elisabeth."

I soon found that everything goes by seniority on a

troop-ship—cabin, bath, chairs on deck. I hope it may be a case of every dog having its day, but I have a horrid feeling that now I, myself, am a senior officer's wife I shall somehow be done out of the best cabin if ever I travel on a trooper again. At least, I am sure no one will ever give up the bath to me. The old type of colonel's wife no longer exists; we had one who ran, or tried to run, everything in the regiment, from the price of beer in the canteen to the length of my skirts, which she declared were too short. The colonel, on the other hand, said they were not short enough. I could not please them both, so I decided to please the colonel, and incidentally myself. One thing I have to be thankful for, and that is that I never travelled on a trooper with a baby under eight months old. The regiments do not recognise such things. Should a shipwreck occur the baby may be tied to its mother. This is allowed—in fact, ordered—but though the mother is allowed a biscuit a day and water, and the older children half a biscuit and less water, the baby must starve. The War Office probably consider that Nature should provide in the good old-fashioned way.

On arrival in India, I found that some friends, already in the station, had secured for us the only available bungalow. Horror of horrors! the colonel's wife had to live in a tent. According to seniority, I doubt if we were even eligible for a tent, and we probably ought to have shared the dog-kennel with Boger. Alas! poor Boger, she died of fever in India.

Later on, when our regiment was stationed at the hottest spot in India, our bungalow was so infested with rats and wild cats that we had to look for another dog. One evening I met an old friend at a dinner party and told him I wanted a dog. He said at once he would give me one. The dinner had been excellent, and I was in that easily-pleased mood when one dog would do as well as another. So I rashly did not inquire the breed or sex of the proffered gift, and accepted it gladly. The next day duly arrived a large pink-and-white animal—more pink than white—a sort of bull-terrier, by name Lulu. Darling Lulu! We soon got over the shock of her first appearance. To us she became, and will ever be remembered as, the most perfect of her kind. When we went up to the hills the regimental dhurzee made her a little scarlet coat as a protection against the cold nights. In this, I must own, she bore a most striking resemblance to an organ-grinder's monkey. Her brother, named Towjer—visitors to India will recognise the native effort to pronounce a well-known English name—also accompanied us to the hills. He was more distinguished-looking, but never

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so sweet as Lulu. They kept away the rats and cats in the plains, and the jackals and callers in the hills. Not that many of the latter worried me. We were seven miles from anywhere—seventy miles from a railway station, as a matter of fact—and, anyhow, there was no proper path to our tents. Stray callers had to scramble down the mountain-side, and having arrived and dived under the multitude of ropes that fastened our tents to the rocks, were nearly knocked down by two bounding barking dogs. Of course, had they known it, it was merely welcome. But if the visitors were of the female persuasion, they usually did not come again. A few men, however, did brave the barrage of ropes and dogs. Among them was a captain in the Sussex Regiment, who afterwards became so well known as the Colonel Leachman of Mesopotamian fame. Admired by every officer who fought in the East as a gallant and intrepid explorer, he had, long before the war, spent his leaves from India wandering about Mesopotamia disguised as an Arab. He became in that then little-known country what Colonel Lawrence afterwards was in Palestine.

Colonel Leachman laid down his life for his country; he was treacherously murdered by Arabs shortly after the war.

When the rains started, life was not so pleasant on our mountain-side. Nothing was ever dry, and the tents leaked horribly. We had boarded floors, raised about two feet from the ground. Under this a torrent raged, and all the debris from the bank above was washed down under our tents—mostly bones and old tins. The rain poured solemnly down inside the tent as well as outside. I thought of my baby whom we had sent home to England, and concluded it was time to join her again. Nevertheless, I left my leaking tents and the sodden hillsides with many regrets. And I had a presentiment that my soldiering days were over for many weary years, and that I was to long for those soldier friends with bitter longing—and in vain.

II.

The Arabs have a proverb that "travel is part of hell-fire." I would not go quite as far as that, but I do thoroughly agree with the other Arab saying, "Better the groans of the camels than the prayers of the fishes." A journey across India in the hot weather is not an experience I should care to repeat, especially as I was nearly blown up on the way. The train was standing in a small station, when suddenly there was a terrific explosion. My compartment

seemed surrounded by a sheet of flame. I waited for nothing. Springing up, I dashed down the platform. Later, when the flames were extinguished—it was merely a native porter who, smelling gas, had gone to investigate, light in hand, the cause of the smell—I became dismally conscious that an airy nightgown and bare feet are not the most suitable costume for a midnight walk on a gravel platform. But these little inconveniences were nothing to the next five days on the Indian Ocean in the teeth of the monsoon. My heart sank when I saw the boat. She did look small, and the sea, even in Bombay harbour, so big. However, I steeled myself to endure four days, the usual run from Bombay to Aden. Alas! on the evening of the third day, when I said feebly to the stewardess that I should be better to-morrow when we reached Aden, she replied that in the monsoon the voyage always took twenty-four to thirty-six hours longer. I resigned myself to my fate, there being nothing else to do. I knew there was no hope of the sea going down before we reached Aden. On other voyages on other oceans there is always hope. The sea may get smoother, though when I am on board it seldom if ever does. But in the monsoon in the Indian Ocean it just gets rougher and rougher.

This particular voyage was also unbearably hot as well as unbearably rough. The ship was very empty, so I had a cabin—in fact, several cabins—to myself, and after the first days, I simply revelled in the luxury of it, and strewed my luggage all over the place.

I believe there are Lines—but their ships do not go to the East—which provide cabins that you can turn round in comfortably,—cabins with a cupboard, several drawers, and a washstand to yourself. I have even heard rumours of a real bed. But the illustrious Line on which, from time to time, I humbly pray for a passage does not go in for luxuries of this sort. Until this voyage, and ever since, I have always been three in a cabin and two at a washstand.

There was an American on board who, I imagine, had travelled on those other boats that I have only heard rumours of. He described our rat-ridden floating palace as the "God darndest little hog-pen" he had ever set eyes on. He was muttering to himself in the passage outside my cabin—alleyway is, I believe, the correct nautical expression—but even an American mutter carries far. This one put vividly in a few words exactly what I had thought for so long, but had lacked the words to describe. She was a God darned little hog-pen, and I hated her.

I had plenty of time for thinking on this voyage, and I thought of all the types I had met in India. I had an

uncle who was an important official, not a soldier, and at his house I met various interesting people, varying from the late Amir of Afghanistan to a certain well-known German prince. I really do not know which was the most uncouth. The Amir much appreciated the English ladies he met. He was followed by an attendant who carried bags of money and jewels. If the Amir liked you, he gave you one gold coin; if he liked you very much, he gave you two gold coins. If, on further acquaintance, you pleased him still more, a handsome present of jewellery was produced. He never even gave me one coin. My relations said it was a compliment not to be admired by His Highness, but I did not look at it in this light. However, I tried to think it was because I was thin: I am sure his own ladies were fat. I had no more success with our next visitor, the prince. He looked, as he felt probably, extremely bored. I felt the same; but at least I had the good manners not to look it, even though condemned to sit next to him at dinner, and to make laboured conversation for two solid hours afterwards while the others played bridge. The next day I went round the city with him on an elephant—an animal I loathe. I hate the awful moments of uncertainty when the beast kneels for you to get on or off. I never can remember which end goes down first, and it is always the end you do not expect, and towards which you are leaning. I only hoped H.R.H. disliked that morning as much as I did, and felt as sick. He looked it,—I suppose that is why I thought of him during the monsoon. But there was one person in India I always loved watching and talking to, and that was the British soldier. The only drawback is that I cannot think or write now of those particular soldiers without a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. But on that voyage the world was still peaceful, and I thought much of the men and their dogs, and all the funny odd things that had happened, and laughed in spite of the sea. Later these same men performed the deed described as the finest feat of arms the world has ever known. I do not think that there can be more than two hundred of them alive now, and how many of that two hundred broken and maimed! How can I see them except through a mist of tears? I thought of them again yesterday, when once more in the East I went to a cricket match at which were present various Labour members of Parliament. One of them asked what the match was. He was told the names of the regiments. "Ah, all officers, I suppose." On the contrary, there were, as usual, more men than officers playing; but when told this, he remarked, "We must thank the war for that." Did he really think this? Had

he no idea of the traditions of the British Army, and of the comradeship in sport, which helped to carry it to victory before the German Empire was ever thought of!

Even I did my little share. Many are the weary hours I spent watching football and hockey matches, trying to show that I too was interested in their games. I know that volumes have been written of the British soldiers, particularly during the war. In peace time he is apt to be overlooked and forgotten, even by Labour members of Parliament.

There were times, of course, when I hated soldiers, such as on my previous voyage out to India on a trooper, when they would play that detestable card game known as "House" all day and most of the night, so it seemed to me. From the deck outside my dark stuffy little cabin bed rang out those monotonous cries: "Top of the 'ouse, 'oo says a card? Legs eleven. Kelly's eye." I never grasped the meaning of those weird sounds. I only knew I hated the players and the noise they made.

I always had one great bond in common with the men: that was a love of dogs. Every North-country man owns a dog, and our regiment was no exception. We held regimental dog shows that would have made the hair of a fashionable dog-fancier in England stand on end. I doubt whether the most eminent judges at home could have decided the classes or breeds of some of the dogs shown. Headed by myself, leading Lulu in her red coat, the classes solemnly paraded before the bewildered judges. Indeed, those same judges had a difficult task, and in one case I remember they gave up the unequal struggle, and the owners in one particular class drew lots for the order of prizes. But no priceless pekinese was ever more carefully brushed, washed, and cared for than these soldier's pets. I soon learned not to admire them too openly; for, having once rashly admired a fat puppy, which bore some faint resemblance to a spaniel, the next day, with an enormous blue ribbon round its neck, it arrived as a gift. My heart sank a little as I effusively accepted it. Its name was Flossie. Doubtless so named after some lady friend at home.

There was also a regular function called a stick-and-dog parade. Clothed anyhow, groups of men, accompanied by one or more dogs, generally more, paraded. They hunted jackals, wild cats, anything they came across, and eventually met miles away at some given spot. It kept the men wonderfully fit, and they enjoyed it. So did I. Like all North-country men, they were great walkers, and like all North-country men, too, they were absolutely imperturbable and happy-go-lucky to a degree almost unbelievable.

One day, when rabies was very bad in the district, I met a man carrying a small dog. I asked what was the matter with it. To my horror he replied: "She has got a touch of rabies, I think, and I am taking her home." I fled. I can see him now swinging along with that peculiar bent appearance common to all who work in the mines, going over the ground at a great pace, but not fast enough for me. I did not breathe again till there was a safe distance between me and the "touch of rabies."

Tourists frequently judge India from the verandah of the Yacht Club, Bombay. "The outposts of the Empire," "Our far-flung battle line," &c., &c., are apt for them to begin and end at this famous club, or at Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo, or other such delectable spots, with a dash of sight-seeing thrown in. Perhaps I see all these places from too much the other point of view—that of the soldier's wife. For instance, I read a book the other day by a very well-known writer. Every word which he writes I immediately read over and over again. But in this case he wrote of a tour in India, and in the book there is not one mention from beginning to end of the British soldier, who conquered India for us and who holds it. And to me at least, no book on India, either long or short, is complete without a tribute to these men.

A highly-placed Indian official once said at a dinner party in Cairo that he quite agreed about the good work England had done in Egypt, but he thought the transformation of Egypt had been brought about by one man, to whom all credit was due, and whose name was known to all, Tommy Atkins. If this was true of Egypt, surely it has been more than true of India for the last 150 years.

India will be for me for ever peopled with the hosts of many khaki-clad figures—such very unheroic figures, in funny wide "shorts," the greater the nut in the regiment the shorter the shorts. They were miners and mill hands mostly, and so I own that in all the industrial unrest we are passing through now, my sympathies are largely with the miners, for the sake of those I knew and loved so well. The wonderful cities and buildings of India in all their strangely marvellous beauty can leave no one unmoved. But the snows, the flowers, the glorious sunsets, the sunrises in the jungle, were my delight.

"Dawn upon the wide world broke,
And the sun's warm rays awoke,
Scattering o'er the cloudy sky
Hues of rich variety:
Such bright tinting as illumes
With its rays the peacock's plumes,
And the parrot's feathers bright."

These are the things I love to think of now; these are my ghosts. But sentiment is not permissible in an officer's

wife. Poetry is also out of place. Rather let me go and pack, and make ready for our next move. Will it be the East or West, I wonder?

III.

Our first station in England was a town in the north, completely surrounded by mines, mills, and chemical factories. We were better off, for all that, than a neighbouring town, where the entire place was tinted blue from the dye-works. Blue houses, blue streets, blue puddles, blue rain. We merely lived in neutral grey atmosphere. The only break in the dirt was the musketry courses, which took place two or three times a year, and were held at a seaside town not far away. At this place was situated a thriving cod-liver-oil factory. I can smell it now. My first night at the hotel I complained bitterly of the drains. I soon learnt better. I found the residents were rather proud of the smell. We were to be three years in this station. It shows how young I still was, and how comparatively little packing I had yet done,—I had only so far been twice to India, and to three places in that country in two years,—that I actually grumbled at the prospect of being three years in this station. Why, now, if I heard that we were to be stationed at the bottom of a coal-pit, instead of the top of one, for such a lovely long time, I should be filled with gratitude. But I was young and fresh then.

I started house-hunting with enthusiasm. I was very anxious to have a garden. But as the leaves only appeared on the trees at the end of May and fell again at the end of July—the chemicals again—it would not have been very much use having one. We had considerable difficulty in finding a house. In those days soldiers were not very popular. And when at last I did find "a desirable red brick semi-detached villa residence," the landlord firmly closed the door in my face, saying that he preferred to leave his house unlet than to let it to soldiers. I wonder how many sons that same landlord gave to his country and the Army in the late war? All that were anywhere near the military age, I have little doubt. We eventually moved into a turreted residence, also semi-detached, but very stylish. It was so thin and badly built that the wind came through the walls as well as under the doors, and the carpets waved up and down on the floors in a gale. In my inexperienced haste, when I took the house I had not noticed that it was several feet below the level of a large reservoir which was just across

the road. One morning I noticed the strange dewy look of the carpet. I put my hand down to it. It was wringing wet. On going down to the cellars, I found they contained at least a foot of water. But apparently I thrive in the damp; at least, wet tents and wet houses constantly appear to be my fate. I hated the whole place. In those days I did not understand North-country people. I was taken aback when my cook shook hands with me on her arrival, and positively startled when the tram conductor seized my arm in the tram, and pointed out to me in an awed voice the centre forward of the local football team. I know better now, and should be proud, as that conductor was, to be in the same tram as such a hero—and, of course, I too should tell every one who he was.

We had not got a motor, and even with one it took nearly two hours to get clear of the tram lines. You merely got out of one town into something worse, such as the blue place. I have never been quite so miserable anywhere, except the five months that, years later, I spent in Ireland. I could not keep clean. Everything was black and dirty. Not like London, but damp sticky black that would not come off. I could not get used to it. Then the awful fogs that came so frequently in the winter, when one really felt that one could not breathe, and the house looked as if the sweep had been in every room.

This was not my idea of the life an officer's wife should lead. Where was the gay garrison town I had anticipated? This murky atmosphere and perpetual gloom and dulness were a poor substitute. I was not at all a social success. It never entered my head that any one could really like living in such a place, and I commiserated with the residents openly. They were, naturally, very far from appreciating my sympathy. They liked their town, and never seemed to go away. When their daughters married, the husbands took, or built, a house near, and they lived, little groups of relations, as near to each other as they could get. Most of them were very rich and had lovely houses. I, the poor wandering Ishmaelite, was always conducted all over these, and shown every detail, from the new bathroom to the butler's bedroom.

There was one old gentleman I met at dinner who had a beautiful sable coat, which he told me had cost him two thousand guineas. He also told me with pride that by walking the last half-mile he had saved a halfpenny on his tram fare.

There was another old man, also extremely rich, who told me confidentially that he had only one trouble in life. "What is it?" I said. "Perspiration," he replied gloomily. What was I to say? I choked with

laughter as I managed to murmur: "Is that all? How lucky!"

My husband has a delightful old cousin who lives in the heart of one of the largest and dirtiest towns in the North. When he inherited the house fifty years ago it was more or less in the country, but the town has grown up round him. He will not move. He will not allow a tree to be cut down, so, at least, he cannot see what has happened at his very gates. He has his few fields, his cows, his dairy, his greenhouses, his laundry: a little estate in the heart of the busy town. They have even mined under his house, but he will not go. He gives, or gave, huge parties for the Grand National. We motored to the course, where a coach waited for us. But he loathed motors, and never went himself, just as he never used the beautiful bathroom he had built, but took a tub in his room. That was good enough for his father, and so was good enough for him. He disliked change or progress in any form. The North is a curious mixture. Surely the most go-ahead, quick business men in the world. Yet here and there you meet an old gentleman like this, one of the real old school such as I have never met in any other country. My husband had other relations also, two old ladies, who had a beautiful place still further North. They died only in the early years of the present century. Yet they had never been in a railway train. The travelling coach they used for their journeys, as good as the day they bought it, still stands in the stables. Nothing would induce them to travel by any other means. In many ways the North, in spite of the Socialism and independence of the majority of its people, is more conservative, more feudal even, than any other part of England. I am certain that no South-country peer has the great influence that Lord Derby or Lord Crawford has in the North. I remember a crowded political meeting, at which all the large number of miners present greeted Lord Crawford, then Lord Balcarres, with shouts of "Cheer up, Charley." But he did what he liked with them, whether they realised it or not. Just as the two old ladies I spoke of ruled the countryside with a rod of iron in the last century.

There was only one big strike while we were in the North, which was lucky. Of all duties of the soldier in England, strike duty must be the most unpleasant. The railways were the cause of the trouble this time. One night about 2 A.M. the telephone went. My husband answered it. He was to proceed at once with fifty men to a police station twelve miles away. There he would get further instructions. In a fearful thunderstorm, and in pitch darkness except for the lightning flashes, he drearily started for

the barracks some miles away to collect his men. I put my head under the bed-clothes. I hate thunderstorms. And I wondered for the fiftieth time why any one marries a soldier.

I saw and heard no more of my husband for three days. Then he returned, indescribably dirty, after an unnerving time spent at some railway workshops, endeavouring—fortunately with success—to restrain fifty bored British soldiers from firing on all and sundry who approached the building, the same soldiers being quite oblivious of the fact that, as they were nearly all recruited locally, it was more than likely that some of their own relations would be among the casualties, should any occur. The sergeant, whose home was within a stone's-throw of the building, was especially keen to get to work. He spent his time selecting various spots whence a machine-gun would do the most execution. Fortunately for my husband, the strike was quickly over. Had any shots been fired he would have had to bear all the blame.

Two of the most lurid days of my life were those in which we took the married families to the seaside. Once a year this awful performance takes place, and some hundred men, women, and children are given a day out. I said seaside. But on the first occasion we selected Southport. There was no sign of any sea at Southport, not even on the horizon. However, there were other "attractions." I went down the water-chute fifteen times. I sat on a sort of ostrich on the merry-go-round till I was giddy, deaf, and blind. In company with two or three perspiring sticky children I even tried the swing-boats. But at tea I disgraced myself for ever. Seeing dozens of waiting cups, I seized a large jug of what looked like milk, and filled them all. It was the cream that was being kept for the strawberries. We had been in the train some twenty minutes on our homeward journey, when one warrior, the owner of the largest family, discovered that his wife and seven children had been left behind. He must have somehow forgotten them. With great presence of mind he pulled the communication-cord. The train stopped. The noise and argument that followed I have only once heard equalled. That was in Ireland, when the engine-driver was arguing whether he should, or should not, take on the train, which had just been boarded by an armed party of Irish Constabulary. Just as the Irish driver then refused to go on, this one refused to go back. There was no later train. Did I not say it was an all-day excursion? We left the seven to their fate. Perhaps they are there still.

The following year we went to Blackpool, a truly marvellous place. And there was the

sea, also a zoo, a hundred side-shows, and dancing in a ballroom which is said to have the finest floor in England. All this for sixpence. This day passed off without incident. I was not allowed to help at tea, and no one was lost. Shortly after this our time in the North was finished, and with a complexion and hair several shades darker, and feeling considerably chastened, we went on leave, there to wait our fate, which proved to be India.

I have not lived in the North country since that time, but this year I hope to go up for the unveiling of the War Memorial erected by the regiment to its thousands of dead.

Truly, the North gave freely —and of her best. I, who used sometimes to laugh at them, laugh no more. I can only stand in reverent and awed silence. The spirit of the North contains the very essence of the spirit of England.

(To be concluded.)

"BOW AND ADORE."

BY EDMUND CANDLER.

THE spirit of independence has never been allowed to thrive indigenously in the East; where it occurs, it is a Western product. In the beginning probably pomp and magnificence in the despot were necessary agents of self-preservation. Then, as now, the Oriental could be commanded only by a display of power. The jolly monarch of the old King Cole type, who hobnobbed with his subjects, would not have survived a week. The will and power to raise up or strike down must be manifest, even if exercised by caprice. The material insignia of wealth and resources—apes, ivory, and peacocks, men-at-arms, hunters, eunuchs, multitudes of slaves, elephants, horses, camels, lions, as well as the ghostly supports of religion and superstition—must be visible to impress and overawe. An atmosphere of magnificence must be created, in which adoration becomes instinctive. Symbols of dependence must be multiplied until the assertion of self becomes a blasphemy, and the subject feels as a grain of chaff that may be blown aside at the sovereign will. He owes his preservation to his minuteness alone: if he is ennobled he stands more in awe, for the taller the head the more likely it is to be lopped off, like an outstanding thistle in a field of corn. Uncles, brothers, nephews who have stood in the path of the royal succession have gone that way. The monarch is safe when the courtier feels as small as a poet in front of a great mountain-range at dawn.

"And when they are all seated, each in his proper place, then a great prelate rises and says with a loud voice, 'Bow and adore.' And as soon as he has said this, the company bow down until their foreheads touch the earth in adoration towards the Emperor as if he were a god. And this adoration they repeat four times, and then go to a highly-decorated altar, on which is a vermilion tablet with the name of the Grand Kaan inscribed thereon, and a beautiful censer of gold. So they incense the tablet and the altar with great reverence, and then return each man to his seat."

Thus Marco Polo describes the reverence paid to the Great Khan. In another passage, as though human veneration were not enough, he tells of a lion among Kublai's courtiers. The beast was led into the Emperor's presence, and as soon as it saw him it lay down before him with every veneration, as if it acknowledged him for his lord, and it remained there lying before him and entirely unchained. No doubt the Polo

family, uncle and father and son, paid their respects to the Great Khan, prostrating themselves with all reverence to the ground. The three Venetians, though of noble birth, would not have felt any abasement in the homage, as they loved the Khan and were proud to be his liege men, declaring that he was the wisest and most accomplished man, the greatest captain, the best to govern men and rule an empire, the most potent as regards forces and lands and treasure that existeth in the world or ever hath existed from the time of our first father Adam until this day. The great Khan, to maintain his state, had a guard of twelve thousand horsemen. Marco Polo has given him exactly the same escort as Solomon (1 Kings iv. 26); and he was careful to explain that he kept these "not for fear of any man whatever, but merely because of his own exalted rank."

As the spirit of independence grew in the West, the habit of prostration before Oriental potentates became more difficult to acquire. In the thirteenth century the European, when approaching the earthly manifestation of the divinity, could strike his forehead to the ground without abasement. His reverence, indeed, as in the case of Marco Polo, was often quite genuine. But with the passing of the Middle Ages the exaction of these obeisances came to be regarded as a monopoly of the Almighty, and it was not so easy for the vessel of clay to "assume the God." Nevertheless, nearly five hundred years after the Polo foreheads struck the flags of the audience-chamber at Cambabuc a similar act of homage was demanded of the Russian Ambassador of Peter the Great at the court of Pekin. The incident provided De Quincey with an ironic theme. In dramatising the situation he indulged his hatred of the Chinese and the sense of personal dignity that amounted in him to a religion. "Between you and me, such old friends," said the Chinese minister to the Russian—Ismaeloff was his name—"a bauble not worth speaking of! Would you oblige me, when presented to the Emperor, by knocking that handsome head of yours nine times—that is, you know, three times three—against the floor? I would take it very kindly of you; and the floor is padded to prevent contusions." Ismaeloff, after a little pondering, complied. He did "absolutely consent to elongate himself on the floor, as if preparing to take a swim, and then knock his forehead repeatedly, as if weary of life, somebody counting all the while with a stop-watch, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and so on." But he hedged with his dignity by stipulating that any Chinaman seeking a presentation to the Czar should, in coming to St Petersburg, go through exactly the same ceremony. The courtiers of Pekin accepted this condition in good faith, no doubt chuck-

ling inwardly, for by the laws of their country they were prevented from going outside the Emperor's territories. The Russian was regarded by the Chinese as a test case. What Russia would do, they argued, the rest would do; but when it came to the turn of the English lords, at the end of the eighteenth century, they were singularly disappointed. The British Ambassadors, Lord Macartney, and afterwards Lord Amherst, declined to *kowtow*, but were willing to make profound obeisances to the Emperor, provided similar homage was addressed at the same time by a high mandarin to the portrait of George III.

It is an Asiatic instinct, this assertion of dignity by the infliction of an indignity, as when Sapor used the captive Emperor Valerian as his mounting-block, and when dead had him stuffed with straw, to be placed as a monument of triumph in one of his Persian temples. De Quincey traces the genealogy of the *kowtow* as descending to the court of Susa and Persepolis from the elder court of Babylon, and to that from the yet elder court of Nineveh, and discovers that in the days of Xerxes and Darius this very abject form of homage was extorted from the compatriots of Miltiades and Themistocles. He quotes a chorus in the 'Orestes' in which the Persian form of prostration provides the poet with a text for much impassioned and lyrical scorn. His own characteristic comment is that "man in his native grandeur, standing erect, and with his countenance raised to the heavens (os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri), presents a more awful contrast to man when passing through this particular form of degradation than under any or all of the other symbols at any time devised for the sensuous impression of a servile condition—scourges, ergastula, infibulation, or the neck-chains or ankle-chains of the Roman *atriensis*."

The miserable expedient resorted to by the ambassadors at the court of Pekin merited De Quincey's scorn. In Sir Alfred Lyall's 'Theology in Extremis' and Sir Francis Doyle's 'A Private of the Buffs,' a similar spiritual dilemma is introduced, though on a higher plane. In both cases the scene is in the East, and the choice death or servile submission to the barbarian. Lyall's hero, though an agnostic, would not recant. Doyle's Kentish lad, unseduced by the vision of the cherry orchards of his home, refused to bow the knee.

> "Let dusky Indians whine and kneel;
> An English lad must die."

We can recall other collisions, tragic and comic, between Eastern and Western pride in which the Oriental despot has been balked of the homage that is as dear to him as the breath of life. Manucci tells a story of a certain Lord Bellomont, ambassador of the exiled Charles II. at the court

of Shah Abbas at Ispahan, who refused, on the failure of his embassy, to make his obeisance to the king. Without any civility or any sort of bow, he turned his back and went out of the presence, his head high, while the king sat with downcast eyes as if he saw nothing of what was passing. Niccolao Manucci, who was quite close to Bellomont at the time, was filled with dread, "anticipating that the king would send out some order to have us killed." Bellomont's scant courtesy did him and his master little credit, for it arose out of anger and impatience rather than self-respect.

One has more sympathy with Colonel Gardner, who, upon gross provocation from Holkar, drew his sword on the Maharajah in his Durbar tent, and in the astonishment and confusion that his boldness provoked, had the address to make his way to his horse, still brandishing his sword, mount, and ride away unscathed.

Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador of James I. to Jehangir, refused to touch the ground with his head on being presented to the Emperor. He tells us in his diary that, when called upon to abase himself before the canopy where Jehangir sat "in great and barbarous state," he replied that he came in honour to see the prince, and was free from the manners of servants. Bernier tells the story of another recusant, a Persian oddly enough, the ambassador of Shah Abbas, who had the hardihood to defy the etiquette of the court in making his salutation to the Great Mogul. The obeisance demanded of him was too deep for his pride. Bernier records how, when all the arguments and caresses of the courtiers had failed, the Emperor Shah Jehan had recourse to a cunning stratagem to induce the arrogant fellow to salute according to the Indian mode. He gave orders that the grand entrance of the court leading to the Am-Khas, where he intended to receive the ambassador, should be closed, and the wicket only left open, a wicket so low that a man could not pass through without stooping and holding down the head as is customary in doing reverence *à l'Indien*. "The proud and quick-sighted Persian," however, "penetrated the stratagem," and emerged from the wicket with the posterior part of his person presented to the king. To Shah Jehan's indignant, "Ill-bred fellow! didst thou imagine thou wast entering a stable of asses like thyself?" he retorted, "I did imagine it. Who, on going through such a door, can believe he is visiting any but asses?"

The Mogul, in revenge, gave secret orders that when the ambassador entered a long and narrow street in the fortress leading to the Hall of Assembly, a *mast* elephant should be let loose on him. The envoy of Shah Abbas, however, seems to have been

possessed of a degree of courage and resource not often credited to the countrymen of Haji Baba. Bernier records that he was so nimble in jumping out of his *palky*, and together with his attendants so prompt and dexterous in shooting arrows into the elephant's trunk, that the animal was scared away.

Bernier, the sanest and fairest critic of Asiatic civilisation, has left us a picture of the slave mentality that existed in India in the time of Aurungzebe. The great Moguls were foreigners in Hindustan, as were the Pathan dynasties that preceded them. The degrading state of servitude in which the natives—the word had not then come to be regarded as opprobrious by the sons of the soil—used to live is vividly described in his letter to Monseigneur Colbert, written in 1670. The same conditions existed, as may be gathered from official diaries and reports, at the time of the British annexation—only the security of life and property was then even less, since the strong hand of the oppressor no longer afforded the same protection to the hordes that existed solely for his exploitation. In the old days the Governor, or contractor, or farmer of revenue, exercised an authority that was almost absolute over the peasant. There was no one to whom he could appeal; for in Asia the great are not approached empty-handed, and the dispensers of justice were the nominees or toadies of the local *Kardar*, who never hesitated to impose an arbitrary fine when, in spite of exactions in the form of revenue and cesses, he found that a man had saved more than enough to satisfy his hunger. The cultivator existed only to be mulcted. The system, in principle the reverse of the Bolshevik ideal, was attended with exactly the same results. No one dared build a solid masonry house or betray evidences of prosperity. There was no incentive to agriculture or industry when the produce of the land or the loom, where it yielded more than a bare subsistence, fed the rapacity of the *Kardars*. These officials, it must be remembered, were aliens. The Moguls were esteemed, Bernier tells us, because they were "white men, foreigners, and Muhammedans." In Aurungzebe's reign the court did not consist, as originally, of real Moguls, but was a medley of Usbeks, Persians, Arabs, and Turks, or descendants from all these people, known by the general appellation of Moguls. He added that children of the third and fourth generation, who had the brown complexion and the languid manners of the country of their nativity, were held in much less respect than newcomers, and were seldom invested with official situations. They considered themselves happy if permitted to serve as private soldiers in the infantry or cavalry. Advancement was obtained by royal favour, and the Mogul raised his officials

to dignity or degraded them, according to his pleasure or caprice. The courtier might obtain positions for his children, "particularly if their persons be well formed and their complexions sufficiently fair to enable them to pass as genuine Moguls." Thus Aurungzebe surrounded himself with adventurers from different nations, "generally persons of low descent, some having been originally slaves, and the majority being destitute of education." Of the tyranny, misery, and oppression under the Hindu rulers in the south of India, far from the influence of the Mogul court, Manucci, the contemporary of Bernier, has left an even darker picture.

The conditions described by Bernier and Manucci still exist in Asia, in countries where the enlightenment of Western education has not penetrated. A day's march beyond the frontier of British India carries one straight into the Middle Ages. In Kashmir, before it fell under British protection, the Sikhs treated the natives as slaves. Unpaid forced labour was exacted, and the tax on the cultivator rose to three-fourths of the produce of the threshing-floor. Moorcroft, who visited Kashmir in 1825, records that the murder of a Kashmiri by a Sikh was punished by a fine to government of from sixteen to twenty rupees, of which four rupees were paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two if a Muhammadan. The Afghan rule which preceded the Sikh was even more cruel and oppressive. And so for centuries, while the people existed as abject pawns, the history of the rulers, or governors, and officials who exploited them was a long record of assassination. Fifty years after security was bestowed on Kashmir the same conditions existed in the independent States on the border. When Colonel Younghusband[1] visited Hunza in 1887, the then chief had murdered his father, poisoned his mother, and thrown his two brothers over a precipice. In Chitral, when he was there in 1893, the chief was one of only four survivors of seventeen brothers who were living when their father died, and he was subsequently murdered by one of his surviving brothers —a brother whom he had frequently asked Colonel Younghusband's permission to murder, on the ground that if he did not murder the brother the brother would murder him. This was less than thirty years ago, and the confines of barbarism are receding. The traveller in search of the mediæval has to cross yet another frontier to find in the to-day of Amb or Badakshan the yesterday of Hunza, or the day before yesterday of Kashmir. Kashmir being "the terrestrial paradise of the Indies," has suffered more from the tyrant than other Eastern territories. The paradise has

[1] 'Kashmir,' by Sir Francis Younghusband.

attracted the despoiler, who is responsible for the slave. Thus we have the anomaly of a mountain race that is servile and submissive. After two or three generations of security, the Kashmiri, though a hill-man of excellent physique, will prostrate himself to the earth, and shed copious tears at the suggestion of a menace.

The association between bowing and adoring and the system of despotism is logical; the habit of dissimulation is not difficult to trace. Of the golden age in India we have no authentic record, but during the thousand odd years that preceded British rule we have ample evidence of the relations that existed between authority and the masses, and it all goes to show that for centuries before our coming abject subservience was a condition essential to leading an unmolested life. The only individualist was the freebooter. Under the Oriental potentate the cult of propitiation, the practice of humility in gesture and speech, flattery, adulation, self-abasement, the servility of the parasite and dependant, are natural growths. From the earliest times the Hindus have cultivated the ritual of subservience as a fine art. Their Sashtanga or prostration with the eight parts of the body (two hands, two feet, two knees, forehead, and breast) on the ground, and arms extended beyond the head, is a form of salutation that used to be paid indifferently to the Deity and persons of high rank. Abbé Dubois, who died in 1848, recorded that it was by no means rare to see Sudras of different classes performing Sashtanga before Brahmins. It was the Brahmins who invented the pariah and the doctrine of "untouchability," against which the modern Hindu reformer, inspired by Western idealism, has set his face. "Have we not made the pariah to crawl on his belly?" Mr Gandhi asked with creditable and characteristic frankness in his campaign on behalf of the depressed classes. "We shall be unfit to gain Swaraj so long as we would keep in bondage a fifth of the population of Hindustan." In the court of the Maharaja or Nawab it is now the image more than the fact of dependence that counts; the reflection is more sought after than the reality. Probably it has been always so. Any one who has lived long in India knows how the contented acceptance of the appearance of things will filter through layers of Babuism like a disease or an infectious miasma until it sometimes inoculates the bureaucracy at the headquarters of Government. Abbé Dubois, that acute observer of the psychology of the Indian, has enumerated some of the privileges for which the Hindu is ready to lay down his life: the right to wear slippers or to ride through the street in a palanquin or on horseback during marriage festivals, or of being escorted on certain occasions by armed retainers, or of having a trumpet sounded

in front of a procession, or of being accompanied by musicians at public ceremonies. And so to-day the Raja will give years of his life for the salute of one more gun, or the subordinate official for the privilege of sitting on a chair at a Durbar. Even the Indian servant is jealous of the insignia of his master or mistress. Nabi Bakhsh, Khansamah, will insist on the observance of dignity in the Lady Sahib of his lately promoted Chief Commissioner. "Oh, but the Lady Sahib always has three almirahs in her kitchen."

In India the word *izzat*, honour or prestige, is commonly used by all classes of people. Half the inhibitions imposed by caste have grown out of it or support it; for the privilege of not being able to enjoy certain proscribed things is guarded as jealously as a right or a monopoly. The half-starving aboriginal without caste will reject offerings of quite legitimate food because he would rather satisfy his *izzat* than his hunger. *Izzat* makes many simple things impossible. Rajas of the same caste may live on adjoining estates but never meet, because their respective family traditions prescribing the exact number of steps that one may advance towards the other are irreconcilable. In the Durbars of native princes *izzat* is sumptuously fed, and one may witness something of the ritual observed in the court of the Great Khan, though on a sadly diminished scale. In some States *izzat* prescribes that the officials should squat on the floor while the Maharaja alone is seated; *izzat*, too, generally prescribes that he should be an hour or two late. The spectacle of the Durbaris filing up in turn to make their profound obeisances is duly impressive, and the Maharaja would sacrifice lakhs of rupees and thousands of acres of his principality rather than forfeit an iota of this ceremonial respect. On occasions the Oriental form of obeisance has been demanded of English officials in the service of Native States. Nonconformity in a member of the dominant race is, of course, peculiarly galling. There was a case not long ago of an Englishman whose native prejudice rebelled. Nothing would induce him to squat on the floor with the turbaned courtiers, and line up with them before the presence, proffering the golden coin on the handkerchief, to be touched and remitted in the Oriental way. The slighted princeling would no doubt have liked to have loosed a *mast* elephant on him in the manner of Aurungzebe, but he bided his time, nursing his revenge, which materialised somewhat prosaically in the application of a legal quibble by which the recusant was docked eighteen months furlough pay.

It may seem paradoxical that the Oriental who worships power, if left to himself, is generally the least snobbish person in the world. The

reason is, of course, that the compartments of his social system are so exactly demarcated that he lives content with the state into which he is born, and it never occurs to him to change it. It is because of this unquestioning fatalism that the humblest Asiatic is often possessed of a dignity to which the aristocrat of the West cannot aspire. Society in the East is static; where we have made it fluid, we have created the snob. The hybrid product of our education can give points in pretentiousness to the society climber at home. On the other hand, there is something naïve about the Indian's respect for established position that makes it inoffensive. In official circles, for instance, social status is estimated by pay. Ask an Indian the name of a subordinate Government official, and your informant, though he may not be able to put any other label to the man, will in all probability be able to tell you his exact value in rupees. "Sir," I was told at a garden party given by the members of a municipality, "the somewhat corpulent gentleman who was addressing you a moment or two ago is a clerk in the Accountant-General's office, drawing 125 rupees."

Our responsibility for class-consciousness is regrettable, but the social ladder or corkscrew stair is an incidental defect of a virtue, and the climbers are not a large community. As a set-off, the democratic idea in India has been translated from the West; the spirit of independence has been introduced and planted by us. And we have done it with our eyes open. When Macaulay's educational policy was being discussed, the consequences were clearly foreseen. The controversy was between the Orientalists, who were for developing education in the vernacular on indigenous lines, and the supporters of the system of "Anglo-Literary" instruction, which was eventually adopted, and is now in force. It was a question, to quote Macaulay's famous minute, as to "whether, when it is in our power to teach English, we shall teach languages in which by universal confession there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared with our own; whether when we can teach European science we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronise sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at the public expense medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier — astronomy, which would move laughter in the girls of an English boarding-school; history abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns thirty thousand years long; and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter." Macaulay's choice was unquestionably right. It is true that education on the lines he prescribed has been unintelligently developed, with results that

have sometimes provoked more laughter than admiration; yet the other system, which would have kept India indefinitely in the dark, as people content with their yoke, with no embarrassing political ideals, and without the desire for free institutions, would have been a crime.

"The English," Emerson said, "do not respect power, but only performance. . . . In the power of saying rude truths, sometimes in the lion's mouth, no man surpasseth them." And he cited the example of Latimer, who, on the King's birthday, when each bishop was expected to offer the King a purse of gold, gave Henry VIII. a copy of the 'Vulgate,' with a mark at the passage, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." "And they so honoured stoutness in each other that they passed it over." This is the spirit we have brought to the East.

It is Western education alone that has awakened and nourished the spirit of independence in India, whether national or individual. Yet the Indian extremist will have it that we have emasculated the nation. "Indians lose in courage and manliness by contact with Englishmen," Mr Gandhi maintains, and he attributes the servility he deplores in his countrymen to their subjection to a materialistic and godless race. Our responsibility for the "slave mentality" in India is a recurring charge in his indictment of British rule. But history does not bear him out. Nearly every record or report one turns to that throws any light on the condition of the people, from the days of the Great Mogul to the period of anarchy preceding the annexation, contributes evidence that the Golden Age before the British exploited and commercialised "the spiritual East," exists only in the Mahatma's imagination.

In charging his countrymen with servility, Mr Gandhi wishes to denounce place-hunters, title-holders, parasites, seekers of favour or patronage from Government, all who he believes to be sacrificing national interests for private ends. Opprobrious epithets are heaped on the great body of moderates, who prefer to co-operate with Government in navigating the ship of State rather than to destroy the vessel that is to carry them into port. "*Apke-wasti, Jo-hookum, jholi-chuk,* toady, sycophant, train-bearer, are words bandied by schoolboys and college students in contempt of "the Government man." All this is a sign of the growing spirit of independence, which, though intended to be far from complimentary, we, the instillers of it, should accept as our meed. Mr Gandhi himself is a product of the liberal education that he condemns; the best of his idealism he has borrowed from the West. Yet he would fix on us the responsibility of hypnotising and enslaving the youth of India. There is this amount of superficial truth in the

charge, that we, being set in authority, temporarily at least, receive from the Indian the concentrated homage that is the legacy of his own system. The worship of the symbols of power, the ritual of propitiation by which those in whom it is invested are approached, are very ancient institutions in the land, and the existence of any kind of authority must tend to their survival. It will be a long time before the bogey of absolutism ceases to haunt the mind of the Indian. The spectre is impressed on his imagination. It evoked the habit of veneration, and the instinct to appease, centuries before our coming.

A fair test of the mentality of a people is the use that is made of the gift of speech. Among a race that has been accustomed to gain its ends by subtlety, conversation has no value as a means of exchanging ideas or arriving at the truth of anything: it is exercised simply as a medium of advancement. Thus the most open professions of the Asiatic are generally misleading, and the Oriental who is unfamiliar with our habit of mind expects the same oblique advances in conversation from a European. The Englishman's trick of going straight to the point puzzles him. Generally speaking, the instinctive aim of conversation amongst Indians of the old school is to impress or please. To-day the raw products of our colleges and schools display a contrary spirit; or, rather, if they want to impress, it is by the assertion of independence. Our detractors in India would no doubt argue that the new spirit is indigenous, and that the lads are learning self-respect from their nationalist leaders. But to be quite fair to ourselves, we must look further back if we are to trace the origin of these influences. The pioneers in the campaign against "slave mentality" owe their inspiration to the "Satanic Government," whose educational system it is their avowed intention to destroy. But it is easy to generalise. If one wanted to convince Mr Gandhi about the genealogy of slave mentality, it would be simpler perhaps to select one or two characteristic instances of the trait, submit them to him, and ask him to say frankly whether he discovered in them the expression of the spirit of the East or not. At Simla the other day, in an examination of candidates for cadetships at Sandhurst for the Indian Army, a sprig of the nobility was asked what he would do if he unexpectedly inherited fifty lakhs of rupees. "Sir," came the unhesitating answer, "I would give three lakhs to family members; the remainder I would bestow on benign Government." The reply was illuminating, not so much in betraying the candidate's mentality as his ignorance of ours. The young man might have been speaking to Sivaji or Aurungzebe.

The candidate for the King's commission was an aristocrat,

but the art of propitiation which he cultivated so guilelessly is common to all grades of society in India. I will give an illustration from the other end of the scale. A syce I had who had served me well for two years, and kept my horse in such good condition that I did not trouble myself to see it fed, became enamoured of a hill woman. This enchantress persuaded him that the purchase of ear-rings and nose-rings to adorn her person was more important than the pampering of his charge. The result, of course, was that the syce sold the horse's grain, until the animal became so lamentably thin that I insisted on seeing it fed in front of me three times a day. After a week it filled out and regained its old mettle. "Have you no shame?" I said to the syce. "The dumb animal has spoken and betrayed you. What have you to say? You have been robbing it of its corn." "Hazur," he replied, "the horse is growing fat and improving in health on account of his pleasure in being fed in the Sahib's presence."

Probably the habit of saying the ingratiating thing is not so studied as it seems, and one is not expected to be so literal as to analyse the honey or to weight it in the scale. Sufficient that it is honey, the naïve and unashamed admission of a deep-seated desire to please. The attitude is the legacy of generations who have learnt to bow and adore. The Oriental himself is not fool enough to believe in the sincerity of the flattery that is exhaled all round him; nevertheless his appetite for it is inexhaustible. He recognises it for what it is —incense, implicit adulation, the expression of submissiveness. If the Emperor exclaims that it is night at noon, says the Persian proverb, the courtier remarks on the brightness of the stars. This only meant to the Emperor that the carpet was soft and smooth under his feet. No rub, unevenness, or opposition in opinion or will was possible. Dependence on his authority was absolute.

The degree of submissiveness in a nation is in direct ratio to its helplessness — subservience grows out of dependence. Before the coming of the Moguls the Pathans ruled the Indian, and before the Pathan he was subject, directly or indirectly, to the Brahminical hierarchy, which to protect its own interests evolved the most extravagant system of privilege and abasement the world has known. If we could draw a chronological table indicating the posture of humility demanded by the different ages, we would have a perspective in which the angle of prostration from the perpendicular to the horizontal would recede on a gradually diminishing scale. The nearer "the Golden Age," the nearer the forehead to the ground.

HEATHER MIXTURE.

BY KLAXON.

CHAPTER XII.

BETTY gathered the reins from Carson's hand, and jumped from the mounting-block to Peter's high back. The big horse arched his neck and sidled towards the yard gate as she felt for her off-stirrup. A clatter of hoofs and a creak of leather apprised her of the facts that Dicky was also mounted, and that his mare was very fresh and keen. They clattered down the lane for a quarter of a mile, the horses shying and jumping like three-year-olds, until the first sharp rise out of the valley calmed them, and Betty pulled back to let her companion range alongside. "Peter's just wicked to-day," she said. "I do hope there's a scent. How's Norah?"

"Very feminine. If we had any shop windows to pass she'd stop to look at herself in 'em. She's very proud of her tail to-day. She thinks she's pure Arab, and she's all vanity."

"Well, so's Peter. So are you—with your new coat and those violets in your button-hole. I hope you have a fall."

"So do I. I'm getting too old. I haven't got over Chapman and Elsie Hansard. They're so absolutely different, and yet I can see that they'll get on fine together. I doubt if her father will like it, though."

"I gathered from Anne that she's very pretty?"

"She is—very."

"I see. Does she know you think so?"

Dicky grinned. "Yes. I'm not sure, but I think I told her so. But that's all. I didn't pursue the matter in any way."

"Why not?"

"Because I didn't want her. I don't propose to *every* pretty girl I meet, you know."

Betty laughed. "Well, you stand cross-examination bravely, and I won't bully you. Come along—we can't waste time, and Peter's pulling my arms off. Pull out to the grass and canter up—we're late."

The Meet was at Singley Cross-roads, and there were eighty horses out. Dicky and Betty were a little late, and arrived in time to see the hounds coming towards them along the lane to Westleigh. They pulled their horses back into a gap in the fence, and

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Dicky let the thong of his crop swing out loosely to the ground below Norah's nose. The mahogany-tanned little huntsman jerked a fist to his cap as he passed. He did not look at the man or girl, though. He looked only at their horses. All huntsmen are like that: I don't know why, but they probably have good æsthetic reasons. The hounds eddied out away from the lash on the ground, pattering past at a quick trot. "*Radical!* (Crack!) Get away on——" The two whips jogged by, eyes on hounds and crops at the "carry" by their sides. A countryman opened a gate off the lane, and the hounds poured through. Our two riders joined the chattering leaders of the field, and separated as the horses spread out over the pasture. "All into covert, please, gentlemen." The Master cantered past the leaders, and pointed after hounds, now vanishing down a ride into Singley Wood. The Kensham Hunt was old-fashioned—that is, they had no large fields out; everybody was at any rate supposed to know something of hound-work and the rules of the game; they killed a great many foxes, and the field hardly ever crowded hounds at a check. The last two points perhaps explain each other. When big coverts were being drawn, the field was seldom allowed to remain outside them, the idea being that a mob inside covert assists hounds to urge a fox out, while the same mob outside is calculated to keep him in. To-day the eighty riders filed two abreast along the rides till they were congregated in a little clearing between a new plantation and the main woods. There they halted, and tobacco smoke rose on the still air. It was a dull day, with low clouds, a south-west breeze, and a threat of rain. The rides were boggy and deep, and the drainage ditches slippery and full. Dicky was deep in a discussion with one of the field masters on the interesting question of the matrimonial future of that official's blood-mare, when a whimper sounded from the plantation on their right. Instantly the chatter ceased, and the horses lifted their heads in anticipation. Close on the whimper came the confirming voice of an old dog-hound, and then a rippling volley of tongues, like the carillon of Bruges gone mad. "*Tally*-ho over!" A dark-red fox slipped across twenty yards from the nearest horses, his brush waving gently, his air quite unhurried and calm. A young hound rushed across after him, running to view; then came the pack, their heads down and sterns waving. They overtook the leading hound just beyond the ditch, and went on to vanish in the thick covert. Their musical belling came clearly back down-wind, and the huntsman's voice followed: "Eloo—Eloo—Eloo——"

The field moved up the

ride to windward, the horses squelching up the clayey mud as they went. A hundred yards on they stopped to listen. There was no sound from hounds or hunt-servants. A few minutes' wait and then the tow-row broke out on the left, the fox evidently having turned back. He ran a complete ring round the waiting field, and then came another spell of silence. The Master had just started to move on up-wind to investigate when from far away behind and from the lee end of the covert came a long-drawn yell from a village watcher. Horses were wrenched round, and men began urging forward to get clear of the crush. "*Tally-ho away-ay-ay!* Gone awa-a-a-y!" One of the whips was confirming the countryman's signal. The thud and splash of hoofs told of a horseman coming from behind. "Hounds, gentlemen —please—Hounds!" The field crushed in to the near-side ditch as the huntsman went by with fifteen couple of hounds racing past him. As he cleared the throng he lowered his head and raised his horn. The field pounded after with the long clear notes sounding in front of them. They spread out into the pasture by which they had come in time to see hounds racing up the next field. Dicky went straight for the open gate, and at once bore right-handed. The line was across the wind, and he could see six good reasons why the fox should turn right-handed soon. One, and perhaps the chief, reason to influence him in his judgment was that the huntsman evidently thought so too. The going was very heavy, but the line led uphill, and the land was likely to be drier in the next mile. Norah pecked as she landed over a ragged fence, and blundered nearly on her nose in an effort to clear her small feet from the binding clay. Dicky jerked her up, and made for a cart-track across the plough. As they reached the harder ground Peter came past with a rush, Betty sitting down close to the saddle, but evidently having some difficulty in holding her big queer-tempered mount. Fifty yards ahead the huntsman cantered through a gateway. The boy holding the gate let it fall back, and ran on after the hounds. The gate was swinging, and nearly closed, when Betty reached it. She jerked at the bridle, crouched a little, and then let Peter go. He slipped over as if it was only a sheep hurdle, and Dicky swore under his breath. He pulled Norah to a trot, kicked the gate open with his heel, and went on at a gallop. The huntsman raised his right arm and slowed his horse. The field closing in found him pessimistically watching his hounds slowly feathering their way across a fifty-acre ploughed field. The early promise of a good scent had proved false. It was evident that only when hounds were practically in view

of their fox could they own the line at all.

Dicky rode up to Betty, his face registering thunderous disapproval. "Never saw anything so mad in my life. Can't you hold him? Good God! if you'd touched that gate you'd have been smashed."

Betty looked at him a little blankly. "Hold him?" she said. "Of course I can hold him. I knew what I was doing. It was quite safe."

"*Safe!* I don't believe you can hold him. Look here, you must change horses; get off——"

"Change? No, I won't." Betty's temper was mounting. "If I can't hold Peter you couldn't." A pause. "If you think I can't ride your horse properly I'll go home. I don't want to make you uncomfortable."

Hounds were working back towards covert, and the field followed them. The two young contestants walked their horses slowly in the rear. Dicky felt that the girl was being hopelessly unreasonable and silly, and he rather wished he could spank her. "I'm not thinking of the horse——" he said, "at least, not altogether. If you have a smash you'll both be hurt."

Betty lifted her chin a little higher. If it had not been that she had a hope that scent would improve she would certainly have gone home. "Very well," she said. "We won't talk about it any more. You'll have both your horses to yourself in future." She touched Peter with her heel, and that single-minded animal replied with a bound forward that nearly took the reins from her hands before he tore off after the rest of the Hunt.

Dicky rode on slowly, scowling, for a minute; then he smiled rather sourly, and spoke to his mare. "Come on, old girl; we must get on with the work. You've got more sense than most of your sex have, thank God——" The mare broke into her easy hand-gallop, and brought him up to covert as the last of the crowd was entering. The sun had just come out, and the sky was clearing. A thin steam rose from the damp bushes as they dried.

The next two hours were rather a nightmare to Dicky. Scent seemed poor in covert, and worse outside. They had moved from Singley Wood to Granton Park, a huge rambling place out of which it was almost impossible to drive a fox except with a double pack of hounds or a screaming scent. The field moved up and down endless rides and paths. Two by two it dwindled, man after man turning his horse's head away from the rest, and asking his nearest way to the main road. Dicky's feelings on the subject of the day's sport were bad enough, but the fires of jealousy were also mounting in his heart all the while. Betty had attached herself, obviously intentionally, to his *bête noire*,

Geoffrey Hicks of the well-groomed hair and the Gaiety manner. Hicks was delighted. He could read the situation easily: there had evidently been a quarrel between the girl and the sailor, and he had every hope of being able to make the tiff permanent. Ten minutes' conversation gave him all he wanted to know. Dicky had thrown doubts on her riding capabilities, and was in disgrace as a result. In another quarter of an hour Mr Hicks was back in his old position as the lady's admitted attendant, and the change had been easily wrought by a steady flow of indirect compliments on her handling of Dicky's horses. At two o'clock he suggested a move for home, and after a glance at the listless and discouraged hounds as they crossed a gap in the woods fifty yards away she assented. As they turned their horses, she looked back at the score of riders that still remained. Dicky was watching her go, and as her eye caught his he turned his back and looked away towards the tail of the pack as it vanished in the next thicket. Betty bit her lip and sent Peter on at a trot, Hicks keeping pace beside her.

Some men can stand luck and some can stand adversity, but few can stand flattery if it is delicately served up. The fact that Betty had deliberately left the sailor and was riding home with him, seemed to indicate clearly to Hicks that his star was definitely in the ascendant. He was a man who ran these little affairs of his by rules gained by long experience, and he had no doubt as to his correct course now. When a girl comes to you from a quarrel with another man, you must utilise the reaction and take her along with a rush. So he reasoned, and from his kind of experience he was justified. In this particular case, however, his data were incorrect and his premise unsound.

They walked their horses after the first quarter of a mile, and Hicks leaned across and patted Peter's neck. "Ah! you lucky brute," he said; "you're not good enough for what you carry." He looked at Betty. "You know, little Diana, you ought to ride steeplechase horses. You could ride 'em all right, and you'd open their eyes with the Quorn and Pytchley."

Betty dimpled. She knew quite well the man was simply trying to be polite, but it was rather nice to be flattered sometimes. "Peter's a good horse, though," she said.

"Good enough for most people, but I wish you'd let me mount you. I've got a blood-mare now that would go like a winner under you. I wish you'd let me send him to the Meet on Wednesday for you. It's near my place, and you could come in to tea afterwards, and I'd drive you back."

"Oh! That's awfully good

of you, but you see I really couldn't——"

"And why not? After all, that horse you're on——"

"But you see its owner belongs where I'm staying. He's my host's nephew, you see. It's different."

"How so? I think we'll settle it all right. Now we're going to pass near my little place in a couple of miles, and if you'll come in and have a cup of tea we'll argue it out properly." He studied her face carefully. "I've got a housekeeper, you know; she'll have tea all ready in five minutes."

Betty hesitated. She was not at all sure if her next words were going to be an acceptance or a polite refusal of the invitation. The horses had just turned out of covert into a sunken country lane, and Peter settled the question of her answer for her. He stumbled, and went suddenly lame on the near fore.

Betty pulled up and looked down. Then she swung easily from the saddle to the ground, and picked up the hoof indicated. Hicks took his right foot from the stirrup, and looked quickly up and down the lane. He could see some thirty yards behind and a hundred in front, and the road was clear.

"Stone—big flint——" said Betty. "Have you got a knife?"

Hicks jumped down and left his horse to crop the grass on the bank. "My crop handle will do it," he said. "Let me have it, Betty."

He stooped and took the hoof from her. She remained bent and watching while he dug at the flint wedged between the frog and the shoe. As he worked a temptation came to Hicks's brain, was driven out, came back, struggled, and stayed. The girl was devilish good-looking, her face was very near, and she had been most encouraging to him for the last two hours. The flint flew out and chinked on the road; Peter, his hoof released, stamped tentatively to see if the obstruction was gone. Hicks and Betty straightened up. "Thanks most awfully," she said. "That must have been painful—jambed in like that."

Hicks looked her up and down, and moved half a pace closer. "You little darling!" he said, and whipped his arm round her waist. In the surprise of the moment she allowed herself to be drawn closer to him, her eyes staring in amazement at his action. He tilted back his hat with his left hand, and kissed at her lips. I say "at," because he missed them. His attention landed roughly on an outlying hairpin behind her left ear.

"Damn!" said Mr Hicks, and held her more closely in order to retrieve his initial error. "And damn *you!*" said the young lady brightly, her big eyes snapping with rage. "Let me go, or I'll hit you."

He realised that there was some opposition to be expected, and reached for a grasp of the crop in her right hand. "*Dicky!*" said the girl suddenly.

Hicks heard the skirl of sliding hoofs behind him, and the thud of human feet on the road as somebody dismounted from a moving horse. He dropped his hold of Betty, whirled round, and stood with his back to the bank, holding his crop by the thong-end. Dicky was walking towards him, and twenty feet away.

Betty went to Peter's bridle, and jerked him into the middle of the road. She was furiously angry with everything and everybody. She noticed Dicky was looking rather queer, but as he was advancing in no fighting or aggressive attitude —as far as she knew—she took it for granted that she was going to listen to language rather than to see violence displayed. Hicks, however, had no illusions. He knew Dicky's fistic reputation, and had heard it said that he was one of the most dangerous amateurs in the ring. He knew that the short-paced way in which Dicky approached, his hands hanging at his sides, his shoulders a little hunched up, his eyes half-closed, and his mouth a narrow rigid line, portended a whole heap of explosive trouble inside two seconds. He knew that even his heavy crop would be no help to him against this lightning-like opponent; and, in fact, the whole future seemed to be overlaid with the shadow of the local hospital. He spoke quickly and just in time. "Hold on—I've got a weak heart."

Dicky checked his advance, but kept swaying his weight from one foot to the other. "Are you lying—you half-caste?" he asked in a low voice, speaking through stiff lips.

Betty here supplied the comic relief. She only saw that Hicks was armed with a hunting-crop, and that Dicky was not in any fighting attitude as illustrated on the covers of the monthly magazines. She appealed to the competitor who appeared to her the most pugnacious. "Mr Hicks," she said firmly, "you're *not* to hit him."

Dicky relaxed his attitude a fraction, and smiled very grimly. "No, Mr Hicks," he said; "you mustn't. You say you've got a weak heart, black man?"

"I have, and I apol——"

"No, you don't—not to anybody: people who plead weak hearts don't have to. They rank with women and lunatics, you see." He swayed forward, his open hands moving a little up and down in front of, and level with, his waist. Betty suddenly saw the funny side of her last remark, but decided to do her laughing later. Hicks was very white. He had retreated till his boots were against the bank, and he was dully wondering which of those loosely moving hands

was going to flash over first. Dicky was already inside the danger-range of the crop. "Please, Dicky," said the girl, "I'd rather you let him go."

Dicky did not answer. His narrowed eyes were fixed on his opponent's chin. "A dog, and the son of a dog," he said musingly, intent on the first hint of revolt on the victim's part. "A half-caste, with a yellow streak all through.—Drop that crop——" Hicks's hand opened quickly, and the heavy malacca fell at his feet. There was a pause. "Go to your kennel now, and—wait—you'd better find another pack to hunt with. I might kill you if I see you out alone in this county."

Hicks moved sideways along the bank for a few paces, then crossed the lane to his horse. He picked up the reins, paused at the stirrup, and faced round as if to speak. Dicky was ten feet away, hands on hips, and head a little forward. Hicks changed his mind, swung himself up to the saddle, and trotted on along the road, his face white and the perspiration drying on his forehead. The two saw him top the rise in front and vanish beyond it, the hoof-beats breaking into a canter as he went.

"Well——" said Dicky quietly, "and that's that."

Betty straightened out the reins along Peter's neck. "I was a fool to trust him, and I've been behaving like a baby," she said. "Will that do?"

"No," said Dicky, "it won't. 'Tisn't true. I've been the fool. Look here, let's drop it. It's a nasty subject, and it's closed now. Are you going right on home?"

"I was—but we might wait a minute and give it a chance to get well on. We don't want to catch it up. Were hounds doing anything when you left?"

"No—not a sniff; I was only a cable's-length astern of you though when you left. —Hullo! What the——?"

A chorus from the full pack sounded a hundred yards inside the covert on their left, followed by the twanging of a horn blown in quick short blasts. Dicky jumped for the mare, and caught her just in time to hold her from climbing the bank to join the hounds. A rusty-brown body flashed across the road between the horses—a lean leggy dog-fox. Dicky swung up to his saddle, and hurled the mare at the far bank. She mounted it in two gasping springs, poised on the top, and vanished on the other side. A moment later his North-Sea-forecastle voice was raised in a yell of triumph: "*Go-o-o-ne away—away-ay-ay! Go-o-ne away-ay-ay!*"

The huntsman came down the lane past Betty at full gallop. "All right, Miss——" he cried. "They're out!"

She set Peter into his stride and overtook him on the rise in front. "Your gentleman with 'em, Miss?" he asked. "I saw some one on——" he stooped and threw open a

gate, and they dashed out on to grass. "There's nobbut seven i' field an' scent's right. —Forrard away! Forrard—forrard—*forrard!*" He drove in his spurs, and raced after the pack two hundred yards away downhill. Dicky was close on hounds and a little to their left. They saw him turn in his saddle and look back just before steadying his mare at the five-foot quick-set hedge in front of him. Betty also glanced back as she galloped, and saw five or six riders come through the gate out of the lane and fan out as they came to the pasture. She looked forward again, and set Peter at the spot in the fence where the quivering of the top twigs told of Dicky's safe passage over. Her big horse hurled himself into the air, to land ten feet or more out in the field beyond, and then began his peculiar shoulder-wriggling action which told of his utmost and most excited gallop. Another and higher hedge, cut and trimmed as if made under National Hunt rules, seemed to rush at her. Again came the effortless sliding bound and she was in the same field as Dicky and coming up to him fast. A third fence, and they were clear of the park, and were crossing the edge of the open downs. Two heavy crashes behind made them look back. A red coat was running after a loose black horse, and beside the hedge a black coat and a grey steed were getting up. The huntsman was riding as fast as his horse could gallop on Dicky's left, working to get uphill of the pack. The two swung a little to the left to follow his example. The horses slowed their rush as they felt the rise, pounded up for half a mile, and then dropped their heads to extend themselves as the long Granton Vale appeared at their feet. Hounds were half a mile ahead, strung out a little by the pace, and going faster all the time. Peter was flagrantly trying to take charge and catch them, Norah was sliding along with her shapely legs stretching like piston-rods, and close behind them came the rest of the field—the Master's brother, a horse-dealer, and a Colonel from the neighbouring cavalry camp. Halfway down the slope came a line of sheep-hurdles (easy), and then a solid post-and-rail fence (top-rail and a near-fall —the Colonel). They crossed a muddy lane, clattered through a stable-yard, had a glimpse of startled carriage horses being harnessed, and of a low Georgian country-house, flung through a gateway and spread out again to choose their places for the run down the valley —a well-known point-to-point course of twenty-three hedge-and-ditch obstacles, with at least two locked gates somewhere in the line. There was no check till they cleared the valley. Betty had a blurred memory afterwards of lagging tail-hounds dropping back past her and flinching aside as Peter

rushed on, of the drumming of sure and apparently tireless hoofs on firm grass-land, of fence after fence sliding beneath her, and of the huntsman's back bobbing always six lengths in front. Three miles of the best line in the county, and then the red coat swerved to one side and slowed up. Betty hauled Peter into a trot and panted for breath; Dicky cantered past, settling his hat firmer on his head and smiling at her. The huntsman trotted for two hundred yards along the hedgerows, his horn ready in his hand; then swung his arm down-wind to the right. "Forrard on—forrard on!" He lifted his horse from a twenty-foot run over a rail and stile, and our two principals followed in succession. Hounds were just crowding out of the field as they came into it, and they made for the same gap at speed. Up a slope and into a plantation, straight through it and over a loose stone wall beyond; then up a gentle rise to the downs, with the pack vanishing over the skyline. A rumble of falling wall behind them showed that they were at any rate not the only ones left in it, and Dicky, looking back, saw the same three following. The downs are wide, rolling, and almost fenceless. In three miles of pounding gallop they crossed three lines of sheep hurdles, and saw none but tired stragglers from the pack to tell them of the line. But foxes cannot keep that sort of pace up, especially when pressed in such a way, and even hounds have limits to their stamina. Just as the horses began to lean a little on their bits, to rush the early part of each rising slope and to break to a trot near the crests, the hounds began to slow up, and to fall back into view. There were ten couple still bunched together, only single hounds now occasionally throwing their tongues and the older hounds tailing the pack. The huntsman pulled back to a trot and looked around him. The wind was dying down. There were small coverts in the valleys on each side of the ridge of down. This was an outlying fox, and one that was probably making for Ampthornton Roughs, still five miles farther on. What would he do now, supposing he had decided that the pace was too hot to reach his point? Dicky thought all this as he trotted, but evidently thought it two laps behind the huntsman, who bore a little to the right and hastened on faster. As he did so hounds turned sharp right-handed, crossed under his horse's tail, and ran mute down the steep hill towards a small covert halfway to the cultivated levels. Dicky would have followed, but the huntsman checked him. "It's stopped," he said. "He'll break forward, and I think he'll keep on for the Roughs." He slid off his horse, and stood watching. Dicky and the rest of the field followed

his example. The sight was worth coming far to see. The pack—at that distance white dots on a green field far below—went into cover in a scattered hesitating line. Their chorus broke out at once, like distant church bells across a valley. A minute of cry and occasional glimpses of flashing dots in the edge of covert, and then they came out on the far side together, going faster than before, and pointing down and forward along the edge of the cultivated fields. The huntsman leapt to his saddle, and drove his horse on along the down, his knees clamped tight, his feet loose and feeling for his stirrups, his eyes still on the hounds below. To Dicky's relief the pack carried the line only two fields into the valley before they moved back towards the down. Even with the detour the pack had made, the horses, by cantering along the edge of the slope, failed to head them as they sang their way over the short chalk-grass and on to the upper levels again. They crossed the downs diagonally and fairly fell over the steep southerly face as the scent came back down the light wind. Peter took Betty down in about three bounds. She distinctly remembered his clearing the whole of a horrible rabbit-warren which seemed to her quite fifty yards across. At any rate he was easily first at the bottom, and went over the first fence into the vale at the most appalling pace. A peck on landing sobered him, however, and his rider thankfully realised that he was at last ready to admit that he could not pull for ever when hounds ran like this. The others overtook her as she came to a gate, and the Master's brother galloped past her and pulled up to open it. It was evident that as far as jumping went the honour of each rider present was satisfied. Each was now anxious to be in at the kill without accident. They ran a lane for a mile, cantering up the grass beside it, skirted a small covert, and checked by a two-acre patch of gorse. Hounds got their heads up here, and the sun went down suddenly, and seemed to take the scent with it. Dicky lit a cigarette, and jumped down from the mare to rest her. She thanked him by using his coat as a rubbing-post to thoroughly clean her near eye and ear, and to remove the unwanted foam from her mouth. Dicky was in much too good a temper to stop her doing this. He just braced his shoulder against her head, and muttered strange nautical terms of endearment to her, uncaring that his new pink coat was being steadily spoilt by her attentions. "*Oy-oy-yoy!*"—a hat went up two fields away, and a ragged farm-lad danced a *pas seul* on a manure-heap. "*Yoy-oy-oy-i!*" The horn blew furiously, and hounds came bounding out of the gorse in renewed excitement. Through two open gates, and

they were close on the excited lad. "Right into oor bloody barton, an' 'e's there now—crawlin' 'e is an' near dead, I tell 'ee——"

The huntsman leapt from his horse, and called back to the Master's brother: "Hold the pack, sir—will you——?" He ran back a few yards, and threw his horn to his temporary substitute. "I only want a couple o' hounds.—Here—National! Trooper!—Ger-r-away-onbackthere——" *Crack!* He swept his crop thong round in face of the pack, and ran forward to the barn with the two old hounds at his heels. The ragged boy preceded him. A succession of whip-cracks and shouts sounded in the hollow recesses of the building, and the pack became restive. They began to edge away from their new leader in spite of the efforts of the four amateur whips. Radical slipped past Dicky, and began, unobserved, to make a flank attack on the barn itself. His manœuvre brought him near the hedge, and just as Dicky noticed him his head went down, his stern went up, and he scuttled quickly along the side of the ditch for thirty yards or more. Dicky hesitated, moved Norah forward, and watched. Radical stopped, nosed the grass of the ditch, gave a long quavering cry, and jumped through the hedge. A moment later he reappeared on the plough beyond, giving tongue continuously and proceeding at a lumbering gallop. The effect was instantaneous. The whole pack broke away and followed, crashing through the hedge and racing out on to the plough. The huntsman came running, and leapt at his horse. The Master's brother tried the hedge, jumped short, and horse and man fell through to recover beyond with a scramble. Norah took it sedately and trotted on, a little stiff and leg-weary after her rest. The line went on across the plough to the next hedge and ditch, and there hounds checked again. The huntsman recovered his horn, and sat looking at the pack as they spread, closed, and spread again up and down the hedgerow. He was evidently averse to lifting hounds from the scent of a sinking fox till the last possible moment. After five minutes he fidgeted with his horn, and looked up towards Campbarrow Hanger on the down-side two miles away. As he looked he stood up in his stirrups, opened his mouth wide, and yelled like a lunatic: "*Tally-ho — Tally-ho — Tally-ho!* Hey—Forrard—Forrard on!" He took his horse short by the head, brought his crop down on the smoking flank, and charged at the fence. A crash and a scramble, and he was tearing up the pasture field, his bald head shining, and his cap sweeping to and fro in his hand level with his knee. Hounds were abreast of and behind him, and as the field saw the cause of his action the leading hounds also saw,

and began rushing ahead with a high leaping action, which showed that questions of scent were now put in the background. The field recovered their sense of recklessness, and hurled their horses in pursuit. The fox was in the same field, moving slowly and stiffly up the slope to regain the harder going of the downs and (but it was a hopeless attempt) the shelter of Campbarrow Hanger. He reached the hedge, and gained a respite as hounds were brought to their noses. Then Trooper struck the line, and went off at a right angle towards the last of the cultivated fields. A low bushed-up gate, which the riders took in turn, brought the Hunt out to the down, and they leaned forward to ease their tired horses up the steep slope. Betty looked towards the Hanger. A mile short of it a weary fox, reduced to almost a walk, was being rapidly overtaken by the leading hounds. When they were twenty yards from him he turned downhill and increased his pace. The tail hounds, all running to view now, turned short to cut him off. He swerved through half a dozen of them, faced uphill again, and met his end as a fighter. A whirl and eddy of hounds round an invisible centre made Betty look away, and she turned to Dicky with something very like tears obscuring her sight. "Oh—Dicky!" she said. "I *wish* they didn't have to kill him."

The horses approached at a walk. The huntsman came out from the pack with a wet and draggled body in his hands, and whirled his crop-thong to keep back the more bloodthirsty of the pack while he removed the required trophies from a really good and straight-necked fox. Dicky jumped off, slipped the buckles of his girths, pulled off his saddle, and stood clear with the reins in his hand. The mare lowered her head, gave a little at the knees, sighed, and went down on the dry turf. She did a full roll to the right, another to the left, came upright again, and lay looking at Dicky with her little ears pricked forward. "Good—isn't it—old woman?" said he conversationally. "Whoo-hoo-woof," she replied, and plunged up to her feet to shake herself from her nose to her long bang-tail. Her master tore up a handful of grass, wiped her back, and threw the saddle on again. Betty had followed his example in off-saddling, and Peter was actually upside down on the grass with his long legs tucked up and his neck scything from side to side when the little huntsman held the brush out to her. "You deserve that, Miss—an' I wouldn't part with that horse if I was you." He rolled away to give Dicky a pad, and Betty blushingly jerked Peter to his feet. She could pardon the little man's mistake, for she had ridden the horse all the season, but

he must have known that until her arrival it had been Dicky's property, whatever the present appearances of the case might be. The field slowly remounted, and to a long wailing note on the horn the weary jog homeward began.

It was half-past five when they reached the Westleigh stables, and the ride back in the dark had been slow. They had talked of the run (a ten-mile point with hardly a check), the hounds, the rest of the Hunt, and of everything except themselves. The light of Carson's lantern flashed on them as their horses clinked into the yard, and Dicky, jumping down first, caught the girl as she dismounted. Carson led the mare in, and Peter followed unattended, going straight to his box and whinnying for food. They watched while hot mashes were produced and some hay thrown into the mangers; then Carson set-to to clean Peter, and Dicky went in to talk to his mare. As he stroked her smooth neck there was a rustle in the straw, and he found Betty beside him. She said nothing, but also put a hand on the mare's dark skin. Dicky looked the girl over carefully. She was as pretty as when she had started out that morning (even a long run is no handicap to the complexion at seventeen). The shaded stable lights shone on her childish face, four boxes away Carson hissed and rubbed strenuously, the mare solemnly munched hay, and Dicky gave in. He captured Betty's hand from her, carried it to his cheek, and held it there. It did not try to get away. Feeling as if earthquakes and convulsions were rending the universe, he looked at her. She leaned a little forward and lifted her chin. His breath seemed to leave him for a space as he put his hands on her shoulders and bent towards her. Then something in her eyes stopped him, and he waited.

"Frightened?" he asked.

She did not answer at once; then, after a while in a very small voice: "Yes, a bit."

"Then I'll wait, shall I?"

"Please, Dicky."

They left the horses to Carson. Rules could be broken on such an occasion, and at any rate they had seen their horses half-way to bed. They walked out into the stable-yard and along the dark drive. Dicky felt for her hand, and got it. Near the door he stopped her, raised her hands, and held them to his chest. "It'll be all right soon, won't it?" he asked.

Her fingers twined into his stock and began to straighten the untidy folds. "Yes," she said. "I'm sure it will. But I'm such a kid, you know. D'you mind?"

"No. I say, I'm awfully lucky. Look here—I've got to tell you. It's the real thing for me, you know. It's serious."

"I'm glad." She turned to go in, and as she did so she rested a hand on his shoulder. She paused at the door and spoke again. "I don't think you'll have long to wait, Dicky. It's only that I'm a baby, and I'll catch you up soon." A moment later they were in the hall. She ran upstairs at once, but Dicky stood in the hall watching her go. He was still looking at nothing after she had vanished, and woke up to find his uncle beside him asking for the second time what sport they had had.

"Eh? Oh—lovely! Just perfect!" he answered, and dashed upstairs to change, leaving the old gentleman marvelling at the extraordinary adjectives used by modern young men. He had not suspected Dicky of having had such words in his vocabulary.

CHAPTER XIII.

Dicky went up to Town next day to carry his reports to the Admiralty, and to interview Somebody there on the subject of future vacancies in destroyer commands. He was away for twenty-four hours, and returned the following morning in a good humour. He said nothing, however, until he and Betty were taking the horses out to exercise, and had given them their preliminary canter. Then he entered the subject abruptly.

"O.K. yesterday. They were quite polite. I get next vacancy."

"Splendid! Were they pleased with your Baltic reports?"

"Oh yes. I dined at the Skooter Club—that big barracks of a place."

"Yes?"

"Met some men I knew—an' some I didn't."

Betty waited. He was evidently working up to something, and whatever it was it probably had nothing to do with the Club. Men are so blunt and straightforward when they want to tell you anything.

"Met two chaps called Packley."

"Oh! Fred and Ian Packley?"

"I expect so. Cousins of yours, aren't they?"

"Yes, of course. They're dears, aren't they?"

"I expect so. I don't know 'em well enough yet."

"But you must. They taught me to ride and do physical drill, and generally looked after me when I was small. They've been sort of godfathers and big brothers to me. Did they talk about me?"

"Not much. We just met in a crowd, you see, and it was just luck we started talking. I talked of these hounds, and they knew about them from your brother, and I suppose from you, and then one of 'em, the big one——"

"Ian."

"Yes, about twelve stone five—he said to the other that they'd have to stop this horse-borrowing business down here. They didn't mind talking to each other that way without mentioning names, because they didn't know it was me."

"Oh!" Betty turned red. "How horrid! They'll spoil everything. Did you—did——?"

"Yes. It was wrong to butt in. I made a mistake. They were talking on, and they mentioned the Service a bit sneeringly, and I introduced myself."

"How?"

"Oh! I just said to the big feller that my name was Fancett, and I was lending you horses, and I didn't like his tone."

"Oh—Dicky! That wasn't the right way. What did they say?"

"Not much. But we left the crowd and talked about it. You see, it was his *tone* I didn't like. He seemed a bullying sort of chap."

"But he isn't really. You'll like him when you know him. You see, he's younger than you."

"But the other's older."

"Yes—but you're more grown up. What did they say when you told them?"

"They're all right. I like 'em quite well. What did they say? Oh, well—one thing led to another, and so on, and so forth, and we found we didn't see quite eye to eye about things."

Betty started, and turned in her saddle to look closely at Dicky's face. "Go on," she said.

"Well—they gave me ten days to learn to scrap" (he grinned mischievously). "And then I'm to meet Ian at Singer's Gymnasium at 4 P.M.—ten rounds, if I can last it."

"Oh, Dicky, you *are* wicked. Why did you get into this?"

"Didn't want to. They're pugnacious devils. I was as peaceful as a blooming Pacifist."

Betty reflected that this probably summed up the meeting fairly truthfully. Dicky would certainly be pacific under such circumstances, but it would be the sort of calm which rouses such people as the Packley brothers to frenzy. In American phraseology, if the Packleys had any goats in their possession, their proprietary rights in the animals would be bound to pass to Dicky in any verbal discussion. A fresh rush of thoughts in her head made her colour up again.

"Did they——? Oh, Dicky! They must think we ought to be engaged or something. They've been seeing my letters home and thinking things."

"Not a bit. Don't you worry. They heard what I had to say on the subject, and believed me absolutely. We didn't differ over the horse question. They just thought I was a worm, and they let me know quite nicely. The

fact is, I think they'd got a bit piqued at hearing you had a man walking round after you, thinking you were just heaven, and they hadn't passed the man before he went after you." He twisted in his saddle to look at her. "And perhaps they've got a candidate of their own they want to run."

Betty was still a little pink, but her eyes did not waver as she answered. "Perhaps they have—they're quite capable of it. But they haven't introduced him yet. But listen, Dicky: if this horrid and silly battle of yours comes off it'll all come out, and everything will be miserable."

"It won't come out. They'll keep quiet about it. It may do good with you too."

"What do you mean?"

"It'll give you something to think of: wake you up and make you face facts a bit. You can't realise what a blessing it will be to me. If they beat me it'll do me good, and——"

"*They?* But it's only Ian?"

"Oh yes! and if I win it'll do me good. You see, little beauty, I worship you and I want you, and if I have to go on just worshipping, I'll have to kill some one or take a beating. D'you see that?"

"Not a bit."

"Well, when you do my luck'll be in, and it'll cost me something for an engagement-ring." He laughed shortly, and let Norah go in pursuit of his listener, who had sent Peter thundering down the slopes of the downs towards the race-course.

Dicky had a close consultation that evening with Carson, the groom; between them they slung a sack of corn to a fifteen-foot rope secured to the roof of the hayloft. He was always in fair training, and ten days' notice gave him ample time. On the eighth day, however, the hayloft floor cracked in two places, and the Westleigh blacksmith's assistant, who had some pretensions to skill in the noble art, was assisted down to the stable-yard by a sympathetic Carson. After two minutes' refreshing douche under the discharge of the stable pump the departing sparring-partner crushed the notes that he held in his hand into his pocket and left for home, notifying Carson that if he was wanted again he wasn't coming—not for twice the money.

The three Packley brothers were well known in the sporting world, at least in that section of it which has competed as well as talked or looked on. Fred, the eldest, had been a beautiful middle-weight boxer at Cambridge, and had done well in amateur work; he had, however, become almost notorious through the newspapers discovering that he had paid a considerable sum to the Middle-weight Champion of England to try conclusions with him in private. He had on that occasion held his own most gallantly for four rounds, but had collapsed in the fifth

with a rib broken and a couple of teeth out. He stated to the privileged spectators after the fight that he had thoroughly enjoyed it, and there is no doubt that he was speaking the literal truth. He was a fighter of more strength and zeal than actual skill, but he usually won his competition fights owing to the inability of his opponent to hurt or stop him. Ian was the second brother, a rather slow and burly specimen, a Rugger Blue and a runner-up for the University Light-Heavyweights. Charles Packley was still at Cambridge, and had recently been in some little difficulty with the authorities for having caused considerable bodily harm to a workman whom he had surprised in the act of beating his (the workman's) wife. Subsequent inquiries at the hospital and the police court showed that in reality the wife had been engaged in beating the workman, but then the Packleys usually acted in a hurry, and, anyhow, his intentions were thoroughly honourable and knightly. His brothers, reading the newspaper account of the incident, had decided that the lad was a true Packley, and that he had his feet on the right path.

The two elder brothers turned up at the rendezvous half an hour early. They brought with them their father, old John Packley, and one of Betty's godfathers, the Reverend Aubrey Brean. The clerical assistant had been called in neither for his position as spiritual sponsor for the Lady in the Case, nor for his theological knowledge: he was an amateur referee of good repute, and he could keep secrets. They had brought their father because it was inconceivable that they should not do so; he had been a mighty man of his hands in his youth, and had been the hardest rider to hounds or over National Hunt fences in three large counties until a sixteen-hand horse had rolled on him during a run with the Quorn, and had crippled one of his legs irretrievably. He hobbled across the gymnasium and sat down on a bench by the wall, looking grimly out at his sons' preparations from beneath gorilla-like eyebrows. Four obvious ex-bruisers in white trousers and sweaters formed the rest of the audience, and it was clear that they had duties in connection with the performance; an array of basins, sponges, and towels in two corners of the ring showed that they were ready. Ian withdrew to change, and just as the Reverend Aubrey, glancing at his watch, remarked that it was five minutes to the hour, Dicky appeared.

He came in quietly, a small bag in his hand, and a dust-coat over his arm. His manner was subdued. As a matter of fact, he was suffering from a trouble that had worried him ever since he had first put gloves on—terror at the idea of entering the ring. He loved boxing, would never miss a

chance of a contest, and always shook with fright until he came out of his corner for the first round. He knew this, and he also knew that the trait might be turned to his own advantage on this occasion, as indeed he had turned it on previous occasions when he had needed every help that could be grasped at in contests against physical odds. He shook hands with Fred and the clerical referee a little limply, and his voice shook a little from excitement as he greeted his appointed seconds with a formal compliment. The Reverend Aubrey led him across to be introduced to John Packley, and Dicky pulled himself together as he met the gaze of the old man's deep-set eyes. Old age and youth studied each other a moment, and then Dicky grinned in quite his usual way and nodded.

"Huh.—So you've come to take on Ian, have you?"

"Well, Ian's going to take on me, sir."

"Are you afraid of him?"

"A little, sir. I won't be in a minute."

"I know. Look here, Brean—if Ian goes too far——"

"All right, John. All right. *I* know."

"Well, don't forget. You'd better go and dress, young man. I don't know what your quarrel's about, but I know my boys, and I'll lay my stake you're in the right of it." Dicky smiled, and followed the seconds out to a dressing-room.

"That boy's got the spirit, although he's a fool to quarrel with Ian, Brean. Eh?"

"Not so fast, John—not so fast. I gathered from Fred that this little entertainment was simply in order to chastise a worm. Does he look like a worm?"

"He's light, but I think he's willing. He's about eleven seven, and a good back."

"Yes. He's a naval officer, too, and I'm beginning to suspect where I must have seen him before."

"You mean he's fought before?"

Ian entered and approached them. He was in fighting kit, and carried a new set of six-ounce gloves. Brean got up.

"I don't know. I'm still trying to remember. But we'll know in a minute. All ready, Ian?"

"Yes, sir. Has the other man come?"

"Yes, and here he is. Come on to the ring and let's get on with it."

Dicky noticed his hands shaking as his gloves were pulled on, and he smiled at the slightly contemptuous look on his second's face. He was definitely play-acting now, and hoping that every one could see. A weakness may become a distinct asset sometimes, and he was using this shyness of his for all it was worth. He heard the other second speaking instructions into his ear, and was mildly tickled at the "A.B.C. for Novices" that the instructions tried to convey. The thought

of Betty came through his mind, and he saw her face as he had seen it looking in at the railway carriage window that morning as he left for London "on duty." It had been a very troubled little face, and it had made him thank Heaven that he had not been married during the war.

As the referee entered the ring he dropped his rather foolish smile, and his face hardened. He walked up to the Reverend official and asked a question. "Do we shake hands before we begin or at the end?"

"Eh? I don't care—what about it, Ian?"

"I don't care."

"All right," said Dicky quickly,—"not before." He walked to his corner and sat down. Fred was holding his watch in the palm of his hand, and waiting the signal. He stared at Dicky a moment, leaned forward as if to speak to his brother, then remembered his official position, and changed his mind.

"Both ready?" he asked. "Seconds out—*Time!*"

The men walked towards the centre of the ring—Ian with his hands up, the left rather advanced, Dicky with his hands down by and in front of his legs. Ian slowed up a little as he came—Dicky did not slow up at all; he just walked forward with brisk short steps. The bigger man had hesitated in order to readjust his ideas. This stranger was obviously no novice—his walk and poise as he covered the twelve-foot distance from his corner showed that. Now when you readjust your ideas in the ring you must do it quickly, and Ian was not quite quick enough. Dicky had spent the last ten days in preparing for this moment, and he had no intention of throwing away any atom of a chance against a man a stone heavier than himself. He timed his walk exactly, and as his left foot came forward at four-feet range he sent his right glove out like a bullet; his right foot slid along the floor as he pivoted. A perfectly straight right is an unorthodox way of beginning a fight, and for that reason it is unexpected. The sound of the blow made the five spectators catch their breath. The glove had landed between Ian's mouth and cheek-bone—no knock-out punch, but a terrific shock to a surprised man. Ian gave a little at the knees and put his hands up to guard his head; he turned half-right and took a couple of short paces. Dicky's left hooked into his stomach; the audience heard the giver of the blow grunt with the effort as he sent it home. Ian lowered one arm and made a feeble lead with his left. Dicky feinted with both hands, jumped in, and punched him back to the ropes with hooks to the head. The big man was too dazed to attempt fighting; he stood by the ropes a moment, and then lurched towards his opponent with his hands wide.

Dicky met him with a right to the jaw, a savage and perfectly-timed blow that sounded like an axe on a tree. Ian went straight to the floor, one arm twisted beneath him, and his body huddled in a queer attitude.

". . . Seven and eight and nine and — Out!" Dicky helped Fred to pull the unconscious figure out of the ring. Then he walked to his corner and stood leaning against the padded stake. His pugilistic second tried to press him into a chair, but Dicky shook his head. He accepted, however, the offer of a wet sponge, and smiled at the mingled amazement and respect in the man's face.

Fred left his brother, who was rapidly recovering consciousness under the expert attentions of his seconds, and approached Dicky. Now, he had just seen his brother knocked out like a helpless sheep in forty seconds, and the exhibition Dicky had given had been an undoubtedly brutal one. There is competition boxing and there is competition fighting, and Dicky had fought several second-class professionals and boxed with some who were in the first class. He had learned the game in a hard school, and although his audience on this occasion were men who had often seen the sometimes distressing spectacle of a beaten boxer being finished off, yet this cold-blooded exhibition of scientific butchery had been just a little frightening in its efficiency. Fred was perhaps the least affected by it. He held his hand out to Dicky, and smiled. "By gum, you've played one to Ian! I had a suspicion you'd got something up your sleeve when you came out of your corner, but I didn't expect that."

Dicky touched his hand with his glove and leaned back again.

"Meaning I beat him by a trick?" he asked sharply.

"No, of course not. We were fools to be careless. We were deceived all along."

"I don't like this talk of deceit. Are you satisfied I'm not useless?"

"Yes, certainly." Fred was speaking sharply now.

"Then I can tell you I'm not satisfied. You've talked like Dempsey at me all the evening. Is that all you can do?" (Fred had a tinge of red in his hair. Dicky had noticed that. There would be no advantage of surprise in this battle, but——)

"No, it isn't. Do you want to fight me?"

"Yes—I'm allowed to have my opinions as well as you. Would you sooner not?" (the last was said very sweetly, with a lift of the chin).

Fred walked out, unbuttoning his waistcoat. Dicky smiled at his seconds and sat down. This might be a long and hard fight, but he knew he was going into it with certain advantages. The two old gentlemen looked at him, but did not approach or speak. For one thing, there is a certain etiquette in these affairs, and

for another, Dicky did not look at all conversational just then. Fred had been away about a minute when Dicky slipped under the ropes, and crossed the room to look at his late opponent. Ian was sitting on a bench with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. Dicky took one of the hands between his gloves and shook it, then sat down alongside him. "Will you do second for me?" he said. "I'm just going to fight your brother."

Ian grinned with swollen and twisted lips. "God! you want a bellyful," he said huskily. "I think I'm too groggy to be any use."

"You'll be all right by the time we begin. You can put your father on to do time-keeper. Can you do it?"

"Yes, of course.—Golly—you've got a punch!"

"Sorry, old bean. I had to play that on you because I couldn't risk anything with your weight. I *had* to get you quick, because I meant to fight Fred after."

"That's all right. If you hadn't bluffed me in the beginning you'd have caught me later. It was better like that. Here's Fred coming."

"Can you get up all right?"

"Yes—give us an arm."

Dicky led him to his corner, pulled the chair out of the ring, and jammed Ian down on it. One of his original seconds scuttled off to the side of the room to fetch another chair.

The reverend referee watched while Fred's gloves were put on and secured, then beckoned both fighters to the middle of the ring. His voice as he spoke had a most unclerical snap and ring to it.

"Now, you two are to remember I'm in charge of this fight. I know you both know the rules, and probably more than the rules, and I know you won't intentionally go wrong. But I'm not going to pull you about or play the fool—when I say *break* you *will* break, or I'll throw you both out. Ten rounds of three minutes each.—Go to your corners."

He walked to the ropes to hand the watch to John Packley, and the two whispered together. Then—

"Seconds out—*Time!*" The old man's voice came as an echo from the Pelican Club. The fighters advanced with a rush, each appearing equally keen to get to business. Fred lashed out with a long left, grazed Dicky's skull, missed with his right, took a jab in the ribs, and nearly missed his footing. He had expected Dicky to close, but Dicky had swerved down and sideways at the latest possible moment. Fred pivoted after him. Dicky feinted with both hands and retreated. The gloves rapped and kissed at long range as they sparred, Fred trying to close, and Dicky breaking ground all round the ring.

The two were pretty well matched for skill, but Fred was the heavier and stronger man. Dicky, however, was certainly much quicker, and was in slightly better condi

tion: he knew that. He was also fighting to a set programme, and last, but not least, he had the strategic initiative, and meant to keep it. A long naval war teaches one more than the mere art of killing. Fred's eyes showed a glint of temper, and he set out to drive his man into a corner, where this dancing and long-range tapping could be stopped. He drove Dicky back till the critical moment had almost arrived; then his victim went out sideways like an eel, tapping with his left as he passed. The programme was repeated in three corners in succession, Dicky barely escaping from the third rush at the cost of a nasty right hook on the ear. As they came out into the open again Dicky made as if to attack, then suddenly walked sideways into the corner he had just left. He not only went into the angle, but he went well into it and stood waiting.

When you are trying to force a man to do a thing and he suddenly does it voluntarily, you, if you are of ordinary mental power, suspect something. Fred could think one or perhaps two moves ahead, but he was neither a Capablanca nor a Marshal Foch. He kept a careful guard and advanced a little puzzled. He was well outside range when Dicky jumped forward, and the fact that his guard was stiff and anxious made him slow to react to the rush. *Pat, pat, pat—Thud.* Three stabbing lefts and a right to the mouth, and Dicky was back in the middle of the ring. He had no wish to be hemmed into a corner by this strong opponent, and this disconcerting action would, he knew, make the cornering game unpopular. He could not hope to bring the trick off again, but at any rate he had laid the foundations of a bluff in the future. He waited till Fred closed again, then ducked and tried a couple at the ribs. He got the inside position and landed twice at short range, but found at once that Fred was no novice at infighting. There was a flurry of gloves, a scramble, an order from the referee, and they broke away. Dicky had taken a little more than he had given at that distance, and his mouth was bleeding. It was characteristic of his mental processes that he at once feinted rapidly and jumped into short range again, landing a left to the mark as he did so. He managed to block his opponent's arms this time, and to start a rapid succession of punches which did no harm, but spun the rally out till the call of "Time," and also made Fred a little doubtful as to whether this swift fighter wished to avoid infighting or not.

In his corner, Dicky found the seconds working the towels while Ian sponged his face. No advice was given or asked for, but just before the next round Ian winked at him. "Keep him mad," he said. Dicky nodded.

The same game started

afresh, Fred trying to mix things, and Dicky tapping and feinting on the retreat. Twice Dicky got his left glove resting on his opponent's throat and kept it there, pushing firmly while he walked round to his right. When that sort of thing is done to you in the ring (and it needs a quick eye and a cool brain to do it at all without risk) it is very bad for the temper. On each occasion Dicky had to cover up immediately afterwards, and rock his head out of the way of a storm of blows. In the fourth round Fred checked his continual advance for a moment, and waited in the open to consider matters. It had occurred to him that he was doing what Dicky wanted. This was true, up to the moment when he stopped, and Dicky took instant steps to guide his steps into the chosen path again. He came in with a slashing attack, a whirl of feints, and then two heavy swings to Fred's head. Fred went after him again, and found him ready and willing to mix matters. The rally lasted ten seconds, and left Fred with a suspicion that his wind was not quite all it should be, and that Dicky was getting faster all the time. Dicky, however, went to his corner with his left eyelid as big as a hen's egg, and getting bigger. He had met a couple of right hooks which were going to cause him some trouble. As he lay back in his chair he ran the situation over in his mind. His eye was closing fast, and he knew that the straight left that had served him so well was going to fail him now. Well, there was always bluff and a good right to pull him through, and also there was the initiative. Fred would certainly go for that eye again. He couldn't do it any more harm, but one could bank on the fact that when in doubt Fred would bring that right hook over. His review of the situation cheered Dicky up, and he came up for the fifth round as fresh as paint. Fred closed in at once, and Dicky let him do it. The closer he was the easier he was to see. After half a minute Fred realised this also, and opened the range. Dicky lowered his left and began stopping him with leads to the chest. It was a broader mark, and it did not need two eyes to guide his glove to it. Fred accepted this and cross-countered, getting home twice with his right on the same place. Dicky reflected philosophically that he would not be able to see well out of that eye for days to come, but that nothing that happened to it could affect the situation at the moment. He got in again towards the end of the round and clinched. They broke by order, and he tried the left, missed altogether, and met a terrific right hook on the eyebrow. A cold feeling on his face told him that something had happened suddenly, and he also realised with a thrill that that punch had been the hardest Fred could produce, yet it had had

no effect on his strength or wits. He slammed his left out, felt it reach the face, and repeated the blow instantly. The second shot connected as cleanly as the first—"*Time!*"

As he reached his corner he saw the blood running down his vest, and realised what had happened. Ian fairly threw him into his chair, and attacked the wound furiously with sponges and water. "Put your head back—all right—it's just in the right place—swelling's going down—can you see? *Open it*, man——"

Dicky closed his right eye, and saw the ceiling, a blur of white, overhead. "All right," he said—"let it bleed. It's getting clearer all the time." He drew his breath in sharply as a whisky-laden sponge came down on the cut. "*Let* it bleed, man—it's all right."

Time! He walked forward for the sixth round, his head inclined a little to the left to let the blood run clear. The referee held up his hand, and beckoned him over for inspection. Dicky looked him in the eyes. "Padre," he said, "if you stop me now I'll turn Mahommedan."

"Would that make any difference to you?" (The tone was not at all in keeping with Brean's garb.) "Yes, I saw you at Olympia in '19. I remember now.—Fight on!"

Dicky feinted and retreated again. He wanted just a minute's grace to allow the swelling to subside a little more. Things were getting clearer all the time, and a few tentative leads told him that he could now judge his range again when he hit. He knew just what he was going to do, and how to do it. He had gauged Fred's condition and the present strength of his punch. He had learnt years before that when you make up your mind to go in and fight to a decision you must put your soul and heart all in, and leave no reserve behind. He began to lead a little more, keeping the fight open and moving from side to side. Occasionally Fred's returns came home on head or body, but he barely guarded them, rocking only to each side to take the shock out of them. He drew a few long and deep breaths, opened his damaged eye as far as he could, and rushed in, slamming out straight lefts and right to the head. *One—two—one—two—one—one two—one*—his arms snapped out and back, his body rocked and pivoted, and drops of gore fell to his knee. *One—two—one—one—two*—— Fred went back to the ropes, felt them at his back, broke sideways, and backed across the ring. Dicky feinted while he caught his breath and came in again, taking two light blows on head and body as he closed. *Whack—whack — thud — thud — thud.* He had been hitting for nearly half a round, and yet he seemed to be getting stronger. Fred grappled and clinched, and Dicky saw his grey eyes for an instant a few inches away. There was no anger

in them now, but a puzzled anxious look. Dicky broke the clinch with two hands on the big chest in front of him, and jumped back. As he did so he saw that Fred's feet were nearly together, and that his body was leaning just a little back as he recovered from the push. The spectators saw a swift-sliding step and the flash of a glove that landed heavily below Fred's heart—a straight right with all Dicky's back and leg muscles to send it home. Fred's hands went up, he turned half round, and came down with a crash to roll over on his back.

Against all rules and regulations, Dicky jumped to him and lifted his head. Brean forgot to count till some seconds had passed; then he started with seven, got to eight, and gave up. With a vague idea that he was failing in his duty, he walked to Dicky, pulled him up from beside Fred, and raised the winner's right arm in the air, facing as he did so an imaginary audience represented by the empty wall of the gymnasium.

Five minutes later Fred realised that he was in the dressing-room again. He was lying on a sofa, and the great war or the catastrophe, or whatever it had been, was over. The room, however, was full of people he knew, who whirled round in circles. Gradually they slowed down, and he made out Ian doing something with plaster to Dicky's eye. He reached out an arm and touched his brother, who looked down at him, and smiled reassuringly.

"Ian," said the reclining warrior — "tell Betty — tell her——"

"Yes? Feel all right now?"

"—Tell her we've decided——"

"What is it?"

"Dammit, Ian," he sat up suddenly. "She's got to have that chap. He's a winner?. . ."

. . . . . .

Dicky sent a cryptic wire to Betty, and dined in Town with the Packleys and Brean. It would have been difficult to find five people that night who enjoyed each others' company more.

When one arrives home with the marks of battle on one's face, it is well to have a good story ready. Dicky told his uncle and cousin a half-truth—namely, that he had had the gloves on with some friends, and had "mixed it a bit." He brought a letter to Betty from John Packley, and another from Aubrey Brean.

There may have been an enclosure in one of the letters for Sir James, but Betty did not mention it to Dicky, and Sir James said nothing. But Dicky suspected something from the old gentleman's manner that day, and wondered if anything was going to happen. Something did, and it started at 3 P.M. exactly, when Sir James came into the library to find Dicky completing the tying of his young guest's shoelace. The knot settled to his

satisfaction, Dicky patted it, kissed the hem of the girl's tweed skirt as a matter of course, and stood up. "Hullo, uncle!" he said.

Sir James grunted and walked to the hearthrug. "Are you two engaged?" he asked abruptly.

Dicky moved to an arm-chair and sat down; Betty, after a hurried glance at the door, sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace.

"No, uncle—er—no."

"Haven't you asked her?"

"Yes. But, you see she isn't quite——"

"Then she must go back home. Her father wouldn't like it. *I* don't like it."

"But, you see, we're hoping that she'll——"

"Grow up—yes. She can do that at home. You can't keep her here and bully her. Let her meet some other men and see if she can make her mind up."

Betty looked helplessly at Dicky. She felt that she hated Sir James, her father, and all elderly people that existed. Dicky made a final effort.

"But, uncle—we're behaving all right; no one could——"

"You can kiss her skirts when you're married. You won't want to then." Sir James stamped across the room to the writing-desk and sat down. "I'm going to write to her father now." He swung round in his chair. "I'd like you to stay on here, young lady; I'm sorry to have to interfere like this, but I'm *in loco parentis*, you know."

There was an awful pause, a silence broken only by the sound of a scratching pen. Then Betty got up and walked softly towards the door. Sir James glanced up as she passed him, and he caught her eye. She stopped by the desk, bent down, whispered a sentence, and went out. The baronet turned his chair slowly round and looked at Dicky, who was gloomily staring at the fire.

"You young chicken-butcher!" he said. "I don't know what to say to her father. What am I to say, eh? You don't know? Well, go out and ask her. Go and tell her she must write it for herself."

"But—but—where did she go?"

"The stables, of course—you both seem to live there. She'll be with that big horse of yours. Hurry up and let me know."

Dicky went out. Eugène Aram on his way to the local Vine Street must have looked a little ray of breezy sunshine compared to him at that moment. Sir James, curiously enough, did not appear to await his return with any impatience or interest. It may be that Betty's whisper had given him some clue, or it may have been that he considered his part in the business to be concluded; but what he did do was to put on his hat, take his stick, and walk out to look at the coverts.

Betty was there all right. She was in the big loose-box talking to Peter. As Dicky came in she turned her back

and pressed her face against the horse's smooth neck. Peter ate hay. Horses are practical animals.

"Betty, I say—what are we to do? Will you have to go back? I say, are you crying? What's the matter?" He paused undecidedly; Betty kept her back turned and made love to Peter; Peter ate hay.

"Don't be angry, little lady—he didn't mean to be unkind. Look here, I'll come up north with you and see your father, shall I?"

He paused again. The object of his affections seemed to be dumb. So, indeed, was his horse, but that beast was at any rate making eating noises. "What *is* it, Betty? *Tell* me."

The girl turned her head half round. "I didn't want to talk to you," she said. "I wanted to make love to Peter."

"Eh?"

"You see, Peter's fond of me, but he can't hurt me, and he does what I want."

"What's that got to do with it?"

The head was turned round to face him now. "I wanted to tell Peter all about it, you see."

Dicky frowned. "Don't skylark," he said. "This show's serious."

"Yes—horrid serious, Dicky. I told Peter so, and he said lots of people had been kissed before, but it didn't make the world stop."

"What on earth — Betty, don't laugh at me, will you?"

Betty laughed and faced him. "You dear Dicky," she said. "I'm ready now. Have you changed——?"

Dicky might be slow of understanding, but he was not slow in action. To put the case crudely, he went into a clinch with such speed and decision that his bride-elect, if she had not been both a perfect lady and expecting the action, would have grunted. She half-closed her eyes and waited. His lips hovered over hers a moment, and then, with a sigh of content, Peter lurched nearer the hay at the back of his manger, placing as he did so his off fore-hoof on Dicky's toes. Peter stood sixteen one and a half at the shoulder.

Eight seconds later (no less) the horse plunged as a heavy blow in the ribs sent him sideways. Betty, suddenly startled, broke away, looking at her lover's face. Pain and joy contorted it. "*Damnation!*" said Dicky. "You little darling!"

. . . . . .

On the crest of Olympus, Juliet turned and looked doubtfully at her partner. "I'm not sure that *you'd* have finished that kiss, Romeo dear," she said. "Thin shoes on, too. . . ."

THE END.

A LITTLE ELEPHANT.

BY H. WARINGTON SMYTH, C.M.G.

SITTING by our camp-fires, we used to speculate on the parts played respectively by heredity and training in the characters of our elephants.

Nai Suk, the young Siamese lieutenant who was my escort, surveyor, right-hand man, and friend in many expeditions, held to a great belief in elephant nature, and maintained that all that was good in elephant character—the humour, the affability, and the sound common-sense—were natural to the animal, and that the unreliability of temper, the unreasoning fear, the occasional apparent treachery, were due largely to the character and influence of the man brought by fate to be the animal's mahout—his human partner, guardian, and mentor for life.

"Look at poor little Lek over there," said he one evening, when the babies of the expedition were playing together round a bamboo clump which they had been busy pulling down and munching; "he has never had a chance. His mother's temper has been ruined by that old lame man of Pechai. See how she bit the little one's tail when he was a baby; he has no tuft at all, and his ears are all jagged by her bites. Now look at that young tusker Mom which joined us at Bang Pak. Mother! that is an elephant! His mahout is a man of Muang Nan: they are virtuous men at Muang Nan; he caught Mom only two months ago up the valley of the Nam Oi. You can do anything with that elephant. He has a temper like wild honey. There is his mahout: he is the son of a chief—ask him."

A tall youngster was standing at the mahout's fire a little way from us, laughing at some joke, and when called by Nai Suk, he threw his coloured Laos cloak over his bare shoulders, and strode across with his big two-handed dah[1] at his back.

He had a charming dignity, but no armour was ever proof against the combination of Nai Suk's camaraderie and my cheroots. He sat down cross-legged in his cloak, and puffing slowly and approvingly at his cheroot, told us the story of the capture of Mom.

"My father is Luang Siddhi of Muang Nan."

"Oh yes," interjected the irrepressible Nai Suk, "we know all about him. He gave

[1] The usual Burmese and Shân combined sword and jungle knife, carried by every man and lad.

the new bawt (or chapel) to the monastery at Wat Luang; he never smokes or even chews betel-nut, and although he is an old man his teeth are still white, and he can march forty miles a day over the hill trails."

As usual, I had to request Nai Suk in my best Siamese to shut up, otherwise we should never get the story.

"Yes, but it is just for your information, Korab.[1] You see, you do not know all these Lao people up here as I do." He dodged his own tobacco-pouch, which I hurled at him, and which fell at the edge of the firelight. A small bristly elephant trunk came out of the darkness and seized upon it. There was a scuffle between Nai Suk and the little creature, from which Nai Suk returned triumphant but aggrieved.

"Three months ago, Nai,"[2] continued the son of Luang Siddhi, addressing me, "my father said I was old enough to go out with him and capture my own elephant. For many days he told me all that pertains to capturing and training elephants. We went also in the small canoe up the Nam Oi, poling far up in the mountains beneath Kao Deng, where the forest is deep, and the fever in the rainy season is like fire. There we cut many wahs (fathoms) of rattans from the deep forest, and made them into ropes on the sand by the river. We left the ropes below the big rapids hidden under a rock and returned home. We made cakes, and on the next holy day we went to the wat.[3] We gave presents and made merit, so as to have the blessing on our undertaking.

"It was very hard marching, Nai, when we recovered our two long coils of rattan, and my father started to find the herd. It was lucky that my father, Luang Siddhi, went with me, for he is a just man and wise, and he knows where the herds are and their customs. We marched for two days in the deep forest, my father showing me the signs. We feared the tigers, and when we ate we sat down opposite one another, each watching over the other's shoulder. For the hungry tiger-fellow, Nai, likes to spring from behind upon a man. He fears our sharp dahs when face to face. We lit no fire, because the herd fears the smell of fire more than even the tiger smell. We carried 'Kaoneo' in our bags for our food. We bathed our wrists and ankles in the mountain streams, but we drank not, for my father says the mountain huais give fever, and, moreover, the shikari is better without drink.

"The third morning at daybreak we were on a ledge of rock looking down on a sloping forest valley a day's journey to the east of Kao Deng. My father said the herd was near. We listened as the mists rose

[1] Siamese expression = my lord. [2] = master. [3] = monastery.

and heard at last a short trumpet, and soon after the breaking of several bamboos. You know, Nai, how they break with a sound like your child-gun of six bullets. We could judge the way they were going, and had a long run to get to the lee side of the herd. Mother! that was a terrible run of ours, from when the sun was there till it was *there*." He pointed up in the firelight to the star-lit sky and measured off about two hours of sun-march.

"After the morning feed and journey the herd sleeps, Nai, in the noontide heat. My father had told me that is the time when the shikari must mark down his quarry, all unseen, and must then creep in among the herd, quick, silent, alone, and with his own hand put the first shackle on the animal of his choice—the first shackle of his life, which shall alter his life's existence and bring him to be a helper among men.

"My father said I was old enough. I must do it with my own hand. Mother! my heart was small, Nai; I feared lest I should not do what my father expected of me. I, who have killed a panther with my young brother helping, with this dah; I, who have steered the canoe in the big rains all the way to Muang Pechai last year; I was afraid, Nai.

"We crept close to the bamboo thickets where the herd stood slumbering. Some swished their tails, some slept, some ate; they flapped their ears, or swung their trunks to keep off the elephant flies. And then I saw one which was young, beautiful, black, and with flashing tusks. We both saw him together. He stood under a great ton yang-tree close to the stream, a big mother elephant and two half-grown ones close by. My father pointed; he touched me on the shoulder. I must go.

"My lord, I, thy servant, knew what to do. My father had told me many times. I left my dah, my cloak, everything, and I crept like a snake along the ground. Only I took my length of rattan with the great slip-knot in the end, coiled on my left shoulder. It is a difficult thing to creep with twenty wahs of big rattan coiled on your arm and not make a noise, but my father had made me do it in the days before. When I came near the herd, the elephant smell hung heavy on the ground. Bah! it was very strong. On my right I could see and hear numbers of the herd, their backs above the undergrowth. In front in the long grass still stood the little black one with the flashing tusks. The flies buzzed with a great noise—and mother! they bit me all over, but I must lie still. I was most afraid that he would not lift his foot. I could only see his back, till, creeping round the roots of the great ton yang, I could see his feet. He stood firm on all four! But my father had told me

the elephant seldom stays for long like that, especially if the flies are bad. So I lay and waited. I thought of my mother and little brother, the same that fought the panther with me, and then I picked a long grass to tickle his hind foot with.

"Then, Nai, the spirits were good to me. He lifted his hind foot towards me—so—and placed it against the other. I rose silently—not a sound—like this"—and dropping his cloak and dah, the son of Luang Siddhi rose quickly in the firelight, leaning forward on his toes with hands outstretched like the statue of the runner come to life, then sank down again and dropped his voice. "The slip-knot was in my right hand. I placed it just over the foot, brought it up about so far, and then—then I pulled. I pulled, Nai. I dropped the rattan coil, and I jumped about twenty feet, all in one.

"I heard a scream of terror, but did not stay to look. I heard crashing of wood, and an angry trumpet. Like the barking-deer in flight I leapt, and fled down the forest slope till I saw my father standing. He was ready girded for the pursuit. He thrust upon me my cloak ready folded, and my dah and shoulder-bag. He laughed and said, 'Well done, my son; now follow.'

"Ah, mother! that was a terrible chase. We had to make a detour to the left across the stream. The herd was awake; no, they were not frightened, but uneasy. The little black one with his flashing tusks had gone off full speed; the mother elephant and the two with her, my father said, seemed angry and restless. The mother started to follow her little black one in his flight, but she had stopped after crossing the stream, unwilling, my father said, to leave the others.

"We soon got on the trail of Mom. The long rattan attached to his hind foot made a broad trail easy to follow with the broken twigs and saplings. It would soon tire him out dragging through the trees and undergrowth. He was going straight for the deepest forest along the east side of Kao Deng. My father did not like that, but hoped he would tire before he got there. He did not tell me then, for we were not using our breath in talk. We did three hours' march in one—yes, we went fast. At the end of the second hour—the sun was there" (pointing to about 3 o'clock)—"we found he had stopped. But he went on again. All the afternoon we followed on; we crossed the deep forest belt and reached the bamboo country up on the southern slopes of Kao Deng, then went into the open forests of the western valleys. The sun was sinking, when, lo! there, in a thicket we saw him, black, beautiful, with his flashing tusks. Ah, Nai, I nearly wept with joy!

"My father stopped and

moved to the right so he should not get our wind. Then my father nodded, and I put down my cloak with my dah and shoulder-bag, and once more I, thy servant, crept in to find the end of the rattan rope which I had fastened to his hind foot. I crept until I cut the trail, and then followed it until I saw the rope-end there on the ground before me—all polished bright, Nai, by its rushing through the grass and trees so far and fast. I quickly knotted it safely to a strong young tree. I went nearer and stopped the rope with short bits of rattan to neighbouring trees, so shortening the scope.

"Then I got up and walked back to my father. I felt now Mom was mine indeed. We took a rapid survey round to find a good camp, far away enough for him not to see or smell the fire, and near enough to enable us to keep watch. When I told my father what was in my thoughts, he said, 'Not so, my son; now begins thy work. The law is that now thou leave him not day or night, rain or sun, health or forest fever, until he trusts thee as his own brother; thence-forward his life will be as thy life, his thoughts as thine. See therefore to it that thou use no angry word and have no angry thought towards him. Go.'

"I therefore took my cloak and lay that night within sight of where he stood. But I slept not. I feared the tiger for him and for myself, and when he whined or cried or moved, I heard every sound.

"Next day he was very tired. I consulted with my father, who stayed in his camp, and told me all things which I should do.

"During the morning Mom raged and surged at his rope and cried out, and tore up the bushes and small trees which he could reach. At noontide he was silent and motionless, but now and then he whimpered as a child calling for its mother. I crept in once more and shortened the scope of his rope with fresh stoppers. I also took a new big rattan rope with a slip-knot for his other hind foot, so as to release the first and enable the sores caused by the rope to heal.

"The third day I showed myself openly to him, and as my father had told me, I called him by his name and I began to talk to him. I also sang some of our songs—oh, mostly about the river and the canoe in the great rapids. He had eaten nothing since he had commenced his flight. He had no wish to eat. But my father said, 'Now, my son, is the time when he will break his heart and die, and thou shalt lose him for ever, or thou must turn his heart to wish for food and life for love of thee.'

"My father had been busy making new rattan ropes for his neck and harness, and also collecting young bamboo shoots with the juice in them from the forest far and near. These I took and

placed just near him, and some young wild bananas, and I sat down before him and played him upon my flute that song of the trotting pony which Nai Suk sings. And I got a big banana leaf and made it so as to hold water and filled it. And at noon in the heat he smelt the water with his trunk, but he scented human fingers therein, and was frightened. But that evening I went behind the hill to my father's camp and told him all things, and when I went back to him he had drunk the water from the banana leaf. And I ran and got more, and I told my father, and he said, 'Have courage, son, he will live.'

"Then I was glad in my heart, and I sang and talked to him until the stars were half-way round the heavens. What did I talk of? I talked of all the things that the elephant master must tell his charge when they first meet together in the world. I told him of the law of the Lord Buddha, and how every soul must climb upward by its own merit and obedience to the law. I told him about Muang Nan, and the story of the old chief who put down opium-smoking, and condemned his own son to die when he was convicted of breaking the law. And I told him of my father's rice-fields and our fruit-gardens where the duriens grow, and of my ancient family, and of how my great-great-grandfather defended Muang Nan against the Burmans and the Kha tribes of the North. And I asked him what his spirit was in his last life upon earth, and if he would love me and be obedient to me all the days of my life, and to my sons after me. And I told him how I killed the panther with this dah and the help of my little brother. I told him of the spirits of the forests and the river, both good and bad, and how the canoe flies down the forest valleys on the water's face, and climbs slowly up along the banks in the time of low river. And I told him many other things which I have observed myself or which my father has told me, but chiefly that I had marked him for his beauty and his flashing tusks to be my own. I was to be to him as his father, his teacher, his master, and his servant, as is the duty of the elephant-doctor.

"The next day, such was the effect of the things I told him during the night, he took food from my hand, as I sat close beneath his long trunk and looked up in his eyes. That day also I slipped the new rattan over his left foot, and then with difficulty removed the rope from his right. It had cut the flesh, and the flies were upon it and it was sick. But my father bade me clean it with banana-leaf and place hot rice upon it, which I did. Afterwards when I tended his foot he would lift it up for me and turn his head and watch me.

"Thenceforward, Sahib, I fed him every day for half a month, and slept and lived within touch of his trunk. He cried no more, but would put out his trunk to me and ask, and if I walked to one side or the other he would turn his head and look at me. I could pet and scrub him and put my arm around his neck and my cheek against his cheek. Then came to see him my father, and we made him smell my father all over, and his dah and cloak and bag, as he had done to me many times.

"And so we moved him, leading him to another place close by. The next day, after scrubbing him well, I jumped upon him, pulling myself up by his ear, and I lay upon his neck. I patted and talked to him and scrubbed his back. After that, every day before the sunset he let me ride him to the stream near by, where in a deep pool we bathed together; he lay down till the water covered him and only the tip of his trunk was above the water, and I climbed upon him and washed his skin with split bamboo. Then I taught him to kneel down for me to get upon him, and we both played there by the stream. And soon thereafter, Sahib—well, we rode him home together.

"Now my little brother, the one that helped me slay the panther, rides him as I do. One day, when he is old enough, he and I will go and catch just such another. But none in the herd, Sahib, were so black and beautiful or had such flashing tusks as Mom.

"See, the stars are turning. The Swordsman [1] crosses the heavens. I must go and sleep by him—he will not sleep without me yet. If I go not now, he will break into the village gardens before dawn and eat five hundredweight of fruit from their trees, and the Nai will have to pay much compensation."

From which it appeared that Mom's education was not yet entirely completed.

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[1] Orion.

IN HANGING GARDEN GULLY.

BY C. E. MONTAGUE.

To climb up rocks is like all the rest of your life, only simpler and safer. In all the rest of your life, any work you may do, by way of a trade, is a taking of means to some end. That end may be good. We all hope it is. But who can be sure? Misgiving is apt to steal in. Are you a doctor—is it your job to keep all the weak ones alive? Then are you not spoiling the breed for the future? Are you a parson or politician or some sort of public improver, always trying to fight evil down? May you not then be making a muff, every day, of somebody else who ought to have had his dragon to fight, with his own bow and spear, when you rushed in to rob him and the other little St Georges of discipline and of victory? Anyhow, all the good ends seem a good long way off, and the ways to them dim. You may be old by the time you are there. The salt may have lost half its savour.

No such dangers or doubts perplex the climber on rocks. He deals, day by day, with the Ultimate Good, no doubt in small nips, but still authentic and not watered down. His senses thrill with delight to find that he is just the sum of his own simple powers. He lives on, from moment to moment, by early man's gleeful achievement of balance on one foot out of four. He hangs safe by a single hand that learnt its good grip in fifty thousand years of precarious dodging among forest boughs, with the hungry snakes looking up from the ground for a catch, like the expectant fieldsmen in the slips. The next little ledge, the object of all human hope and desire, is only some twelve feet away—about the length of the last leap of that naked bunch of clenched and quivering muscles, from whom you descend, at the wild horse that he had stalked through the grass. Each time you get up a hard pitch you have succeeded in life. Besides, no one can say you have hurt him.

Care will come back in the end; the clouds return after the rain; but for those first heavenly minutes of sitting secure and supreme at the top of Moss Ghyll or the Raven Crag Gully, you are Columbus when he saw land from the rigging, and Gibbon when he laid down his pen in the garden house at Lausanne. It's good for you too; it makes you more decent. No one, I firmly believe, could be utterly mean on the very tip of the Weisshorn. I could, if I had known the way, have written a lyric

about these agreeable truths as I sat by myself in the tiny inn at Llynn Ogwen, where Telford's great London-to-Holyhead road climbs over a pass between three-thousand-foot Carnedds and Glyders. I was a convalescent then, condemned still to a month of rest cure for body and mind. But it was June, and fine weather. Rocks had lately become dry and warm.

There are places in Britain where rock-climbing cannot be honestly called a rest cure. I mean, for the body. Look at the Coolin—all the way that a poor invalid must tramp from Sligachan southward before he gets among the rough, trusty, prehensible gabbro, the best of all God's stones. Think of Scawfell Crag, the finest crag in the world, but its base cut off from the inn by all that Sisyphean plod up the heart-breaking lengths of Brown Tongue. From Ogwen you only need walk half an hour, almost on the flat, and then—there you are, at the foot of your climb. The more I considered the matter, the more distinctly could I perceive that my doctor, when saying, "Avoid all violent exercise," meant that if ever I got such an opening as this for a little "steady six-furlong work," as it is called in the training reports, I ought to take care not to miss it.

But I was the only guest at the inn. And to climb alone is counted a sin against the spirit of the sport. All the early fathers of climbing held the practice heretical. Certainly some of them—Whymper, Tyndall, and others—climbed by themselves when they had a mind to. Thus did King David, on distinguished occasions, relax the general tensity of his virtue. But these exceptions could not obscure the general drift of the law and the prophets of mountaineering. Then came another pause-giving reflection. If, as the Greeks so delicately put it, anything incurable happens while you are climbing alone, your clay is exposed, defenceless and dumb, to nasty *obiter dicta* during the inquest. "Woe unto him," as Solomon says, "who is alone when he falleth." Insensate rustic coroners and juries, well as they may understand that riding to hounds in a stone-wall country is one of the choicer forms of prudence, will prose and grumble over extinct mountaineers. Their favourite vein is the undesirable one of their brother, the First Clown in 'Hamlet,' who thought it a shame that Ophelia (she seems to have slipped up while climbing a tree) "should have countenance in this world to drown or hang herself more than her even Christian."

No mean impediments these to a sensitive, conscientious, nature's design for seeking health and joy among the attractive gullies and slabs that surround Llyn Idwal. Against them I marshalled all that I could remember of St Paul's slighting observations on the law; also any agility that I

had gained in the Oxford Greats school in resolving disagreeable discords into agreeable higher harmonies. Black was certainly not white. Still, as the good Hegelian said, black might, after all, be an aspect of white. In time it was duly clear to my mind that sin lies not in the corporal act, but in the thoughts of the sinner. So long as the heart sincerely conversed with the beauty of the truths on which rested the rule of never climbing alone, it mattered little what the mere legs did: your soul was not in your legs. One of casuistry's brightest triumphs had been fairly won, my liberty gained, my intellectual integrity saved, my luncheon sandwiches ordered for eight in the morning, when somebody else arrived at the inn.

He stood confessed a botanist —he had the large green cylindrical can of the tribe, oval in section and hung by a strap from the shoulder, like the traditional *vivandière's* little cask in French art. He was also, I found while we smoked through that evening together, a good fellow. He had, too, a good leg, if one only. The other was stiff and unbendable at the knee. He had broken it last year, he said, and the bones seemed to have set only too hard, or else Nature had gracelessly grudged to the mended knee-joint of her lover a proper supply of whatever substitute she uses for ball bearings.

His name was Darwin. "No relation, really," he humbly assured me. His father was only some obscure squire. The son's Christian name had been Charles at the font, but, on coming of age, the dear fellow had felt it immodest to prey any more than he need upon his eponymous hero's thrice-honoured names. So he had meekly converted the Charles by deed poll into Thomas. This lowly and beautiful gesture convinced me, as you may suppose, that here was the man to go climbing with. He was indeed one of the innocent, one-thoughted kind that wake up happy each day and never turn crusty, and always think you are being too good to them.

One lure alone had drawn him to these outworks of Snowdon. Some eccentric flower grew on these heights, and a blank page in one of his books of squashed specimens ached for it. Was it so lovely, I asked, like a goose. He was too gentle to snub me. But all that fellow's thoughts shone out through his face. Every flower that blew—to this effect did his soul mildly rebuke mine—was beauteous beyond Helen's eyes. All he said was: "No, not fair, perhaps, to outward view as many roses be; but just think!—it grows on no patch of ground in the world but these crags!"

"It is not merely better dressed," said I, "than Solomon. It is wiser."

It was about then, I think, that the heart of the man who had gone mad on the

green-stuff and that of the man who knew what was what, in the way of a recreation, rushed together like Paolo's and Francesca's. What had already become an *entente cordiale* ripened at tropical speed into alliance. Darwin had found a second, half-invalided perhaps, but still the holder of two unqualified legs, for to-morrow's quest of his own particular Grail. To me it now seemed to be no accident that Darwin had come to the inn: it was ordained, like the more permanent union of marriage, for a remedy against sin, and to avoid climbing alone.

We got down to business at once. A charming gully, I told him, led right up the big crag over Cwm Idwal. Not Twll Du, the ill-famed Devil's Kitchen. That, I frankly said, was justly *detestata matribus*—wet and rotten and lethal, and quite flowerless too. My gully, though close to that man-eating climb, was quite another affair. Mine was the place for town children to spend a happy day in the country; the very place also for starting the day's search for the object of Darwin's desire. In saying this, too, I was honest. Lots of plants grow in some gullies; ferns, mosses, grasses, all sorts of greens flourish in a damp cleft; why not one kind of waste rabbit-food as well as another? You see, I had not been a casuist merely, before Darwin came. I had used the eyes Heaven gave me, and reconnoitred the gully well from below, and if any flower knew how to tell good from bad, in the way of a scramble, it would be there. I ended upon a good note. The place's name, I said impressively, was Hanging Garden Gully, no doubt because of the rich indigenous flora.

His eyes shone at that, and we went straight to the kitchen to ask Mrs Jones for the loan of a rope. I had none with me that journey: the sick are apt to relinquish improvidently these necessaries of a perfect life. Now, in the classics of mountaineering, the right thing in such cases of improvised enterprise is that the landlady lends you her second-best clothes-line. Far happier we, Mrs Jones having by her a 120-foot length of the right Alpine rope, with the red worsted thread in its middle. It had been left in her charge by a famous pillar of the Scottish Mountaineering Club till he should come that way again. "The gentleman," Mrs Jones told us, "said I was always to let any climbing gentlemen use it." Heaven was palpably smiling upon our attempt.

The sun smiled benedictively, too, on the halt and the sick as they stood, about nine the next morning, roping up at the foot of their climb. "A fisherman's bend," I took care to explain, as I knotted one end of the rope round Darwin's chest.

"The botanical name," he replied, "did I tell you?—is

Lloydia." How some men do chatter when they are happy! Can't carry their beans.

We were not likely to need the whole 120 feet of the rope. So I tied myself on at its middle and coiled the odd 60 feet round my shoulder. "A double overhand knot," I confessed, as I tightened it round me. "A bad knot, but for once it may do us no harm."

"The vernacular name," said the garrulous fellow, "is spider-wort."

"Tut, tut!" I inwardly said.

The lower half of that gully was easier than it had looked: just enough in it to loosen your muscles and make you want more. Higher up the gully grew shallow, and had greater interest. The top part of all, as I remember it now, might be called either a chimney or crack, being both. In horizontal section it was a large obtuse angle indented into the face of the crag. The crag at this part, and the gully's bed with it, rose at an angle of some 60 degrees. Now when you climb rock at an angle of 60 degrees, the angle seems to be just 90. In early mountaineering records the pioneers often say, "Our situation was critical. Above us, the crag rose vertical," or, "To descend was impossible now. But in front the rocky face, for some time perpendicular, had now begun to overhang." If you take a clinometer to the scenes of some of those liberal estimates, you blush for your kind. The slope of the steepest — and easiest—ridge of the three by which the Matterhorn is climbed is only 39 degrees. But this, though not purely digressive, is partly so. All that strictly had to be said was that an upright and very obtuse-angled trough in smooth rock that rises at 60 degrees cannot be climbed.

But in the very bed of our trough there had been eroded, from top to bottom, a deepish irregular crack in the rock. Into this crack, at most parts, you could stick a foot, a knee, or an arm. Also, the sides of the large obtuse angle, when you looked closely, were not utterly smooth. On the right wall, as we looked up, certain small wrinkles, bunions, and other minute but lovable diversities in the face of the stone gave promise of useful points of resistance for any right boot that might scrape about on the wall in the hope of exerting auxiliary lateral pressure, while the left arm and thigh, hard at work in the crack, wriggled you up by a succession of caterpillarish squirms. This delectable passage was 80 feet high, as I measured it with my experienced eye. An inexperienced measuring-tape might have put it at fifty. To any new recruit to the cause—above all, to one with a leg as inflexible as the stoniest stone that it pressed—I felt that the place was likely to offer all that he could wish in the line of baptisms of fire. Still, as the pioneers said, to descend was impos-

sible now: the crack was too sweet to be left. And Darwin, thus far, had come up like a lamplighter, really. I told him so, frankly. Alpine guides are the men at psychology. Do they not get the best out of the rawest new client, in any hard place, by ceasing to hide the high estimate that they have formed of his natural endowment for the sport? "Vous êtes—je vous dis franchement, monsieur—un chamois! Un véritable chat de montagne!"

I was leading the party. I was the old hand. Besides, I could bend both my knees. Desiring Darwin to study my movements, so that he presently might—so far as conformity would not cramp his natural talents—copy them closely, I now addressed myself to the crack. When half-way up I heard the voice of a good child enduring, with effort, a painful call upon its patience. "Any Lloydia yet?" it wistfully said. Between my feet I saw Darwin below. Well, he was certainly paying the rope out all right, as I had enjoined; but he did it "like them that dream." His mind was not in it. All the time he was peering hungrily over the slabby containing walls of the gully, and now he just pawed one of them here and there with a tentative foot,—you know how a puppy, when first it sees ice, paws the face of the pond. "These botanists!" I thought. "These fanatics!" You know how, during a happy physical effort—a race or a hunt, a fight or a game—you think, with a sort of internal quiet, about a lot of old things. There came back to my mind the old lines that I had once had to make Latin verse of—

> "How vainly men themselves amaze,
> To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
> And their incessant labours see
> Crowned from some single herb or tree."

Meanwhile I took a precaution. I first unroped myself. Then I passed the rope, from below, through the space behind a stone that was jammed fast in the crack. Then I roped myself on again, just at my old place on the rope. A plague of a job it was, too, with all those 60 feet of spare rope to uncoil and recoil. But you see how it worked: I had now got the enthusiast moored. Between him and me the rope went through the eye of a needle, so I could go blithely on. I went. In the top of the crack I found a second jammed stone. It was bigger than number one; in fact it blocked the way and made you clamber round outside it rather interestingly; but it, too, had daylight showing through a hole behind it. Sounds from below were again improving my natural stock of prudence. You can't, I thought, be too safe. Once more I unroped, just under this chockstone, and pushed the rope up through the hole at its back. When the rope fell down to me, outwards over the top of the

stone, I tied on again, just as before, and then scrambled up over the outer side of the stone with an ecstatic pull on both arms, and sat on its top in the heaven that big-game hunters know when they lie up against the slain tiger and smoke.

If you have bent up your mind to take in the details, you will now have an imposing vision of the connections of Darwin and me with each other and with the Primary or Palæozoic rocks of Cambria. From Darwin, tied on to its end, the rope ran, as freely as a bootlace runs through the eyelets, behind the jammed stone 30 feet above his head, and then again behind my present throne of glory at the top. Then it was tied on to me; and then there were 60 feet, half its length, left over to play with.

Clearly Darwin, not being a thread, or even a rope, could not come up the way that the rope did, through the two needle-eyes. Nor did I care, he being the thing that he was, to bid him untie and then to pull up his end of the rope through the eyes, drop it down to him clear through the air, and tell him to tie on again. He was, as the Irish say of the distraught, "fit to be tied," and not at all fit for the opposite. If he were loose, he might at any moment espy that Circe of his in some place out of bounds. There seemed to be only one thing to do. I threw down the spare 60 feet of the rope, and told him first to tie himself on to its end, and then, but not before, to untie himself from the other. I could not quite see these orders obeyed. A bulge of rock came between him and my eyes, but I was explicit. "Remember that fisherman's bend!" I shouted. Perhaps my voice was rather austere; but who would not forgive a wise virgin for saying, a little drily, to one of the foolish, "Well, use your spare can." As soon as he sang out "All right," I took a good haul at what was now the working half of the rope, to test his knot-making. Yes, he was all right. So I bade him come up, and he started. Whenever he looked up I saw that he had a wild gadding eye; and whenever he stopped to breathe during the struggle he gasped, "I can't see it yet."

He came nearly half-way, and then he did see it. He had just reached the worst part. Oh, the Sirens know when to start singing. That flower of evil was far out of his reach, or of what his reach ought to have been. Some 12 feet away on his right it was rooted in some infinitesimal pocket of blown soil, a mere dirty thumb-nailful of clay. For a moment the lover eyed the beloved across one huge slab of steep stone with no real foothold or handhold upon it—only a few efflorescent minutiæ small as the bubukles and whelks and knobs on the nose of some fossil Bardolph. The whole wall of the gully just there was what any man who

could climb would have written off as unclimbable. Passion, however, has her own standards, beyond the comprehension of the wise.

> "His eye but saw that light of love,
> The only star it hailed above."

My lame Leander gave one whinny of desire. Then he left all and made for his Hero.

You know the way that a man, who has no idea how badly he bats, will sometimes go in and hit an unplayable bowler right out of the ground, simply because the batsman is too green to know that the bowler cannot be played. Perhaps that was the way. Or perhaps your sound climber, having his wits, may leave, at his boldest, a margin of safety, as engineers call it, so wide that a madman may cut quite a lot off its edge without coming surely to grief. Or was it only a joke of the gods among themselves over their wine? Or can it be that the special arrangements known to be made for the safety of sailors, when in their cups, are extended at times to cover the case of collectors overcome by the strong waters of the acquisitive instinct? Goodness knows. Whatever the powers that helped him, this crippled man, who had never tried climbing before, went skating off to his right flank, across that impossible slant, on one foot and one stilt, making a fool of the science of mountaineering.

I vetoed, I imprecated, I grew Athanasian. All utterly useless. As soon could you whistle a dog back to heel when he fleets off on fire with some fresh amour. I could only brace myself, take a good hold of the rope in both hands, and be ready to play the wild salmon below, as soon as he slipped and the line ran out tight. While I waited I saw, for the first time, another piquant detail of our case. Darwin, absorbed in his greed, had never untied the other end of the rope. So he was now tied on to both ends. The whole rope made a circle, a vicious circle. Our whole caravan was sewn on to the bony structure of Wales with two big stitches, one at each jammed stone.

You see how it would work. When Darwin should fall, as he must, and hang in the air from my hands, gravitation would swing him back into the centre of the chimney, straight below me, bashing him hard against the chimney's opposite wall. No doubt he would be stunned. I should never be be able to hoist his dead weight through the air to my perch, so I should have to lower him to the foot of the chimney. That would just use up the full 60 feet of rope. It would run the two 60-foot halves of the rope so tight that I should never be able to undo the bad central knot that confined me. Could I but cut it when Darwin was lowered into provisional safety, and then climb down to see to him! No; I had lost my knife two days ago. I should

be like a netted lion, with no mouse to bite through his cords; a Prometheus, bound to his rock.

But life spoils half her best crises. That wretch never slipped. He that by this time had no sort of right to his life came back as he went, treading on air, but now with that one bloom of the spider-wort in his mouth. Apologising for slowness, and panting with haste, he writhed up the crack, till his head appeared over the chockstone beside me. Then he gave one cry of joy, surged up over the stone, purring with pleasure, and charged the steep slope of slippery grass above the precipice we had scaled. "You never told me!" he cried; and then for the first time I noticed that up here the whole place was speckled with Lloydia. The next moment Darwin fell suddenly backwards, as if Lloyd himself or some demon gardener of his had planted a very straight one on the chin of the onrushing trespasser in his pleasaunce. You guess? Yes. One of his two tethers, the one coming up from behind the lower jammed stone, had run out; it had pulled him up short as he leapt upon the full fruition of his desire.

He was easy to field as he rolled down the grass. But his tug on the rope had worked it well into some crevice between the lower jammed stone and the wall of the crack. We were anchored now, good and fast, to that stone, more than three fathoms below. What to do now? Climb down and clear the jammed rope? Leave that lame voluptuary rioting upon a precipice's edge? Scarcely wise—would it have been? Puzzled and angry, I cast away shame. I knew well that as Spartan troops had to come back with their shields or upon them, or else have trouble with their mothers, a climber who leaves his tackle behind in a retreat is likely to be a scorn and a hissing. Still, I cast away shame. Ours was no common case; no common ethics would meet it. I untied us both, and threw both ends of the rope down the chimney; then I let Darwin graze for a minute; then I drove him relentlessly up the steep grass to the top of the crag, and round by the easy walking way down.

As we passed down the valley below I looked up. The whole length of our chimney was visibly draped with the pendent double length of that honest Scots mountaineer's rope. "I don't really know how to thank you enough!" Darwin was babbling beside me, "for giving me such a day."

But I felt as if I were one of the villains in plays, who compromise women of virtue and rank by stealing their fans and leaving them lying about in the rooms of bad bachelors. Much might be said for climbing alone, no matter what the authorities thought. A good time it would be, all to myself, when I came back to salvage that rope.

A FISHING TRIP IN THE EMERALD ISLE.

BY A. W. LONG.

VIII.

THE glass went up slowly, and then remained high and steady for some days. As there was no immediate prospect of a flood and grilse, we determined to make an expedition to a large lake about thirty-five miles to the north-east, famous for its dapping. We wired to a man who kept a sporting hotel on the shores of this lake, Lough Rusky, and on receiving a reply that you "could not see the water for may-fly," started to get our kit together, meaning to go in Lizzie the next day.

Pat's hotel on the very shores of Lough Rusky is probably the most beautifully situated hotel of its kind in the West of Ireland, and Pat himself was certainly the dirtiest-looking man we had yet met in that country, but possessed the manners of an emperor.

He told us that the prospects of sport were of the best, and after promising to have a boat and two good boatmen ready for us at an early hour, we retired to bed. When dressing the next morning I heard Charles, whose room was next to mine, shouting for the boots. After a time Pat's voice answered from the hall below asking what he lacked, and Charles told him that his boots had not been touched. A pause, and Pat asked where he had left them. "Outside my door, of course," snapped Charles. "Sorr," said Pat in his grandest tone of voice, "if you had left yer gold watch and chain outside yer door, sorra one in this house would have touched them." Which unexpected reply so flabbergasted Charles that without another word he put on his boots dirty, probably for the first time in his life.

Breakfast over, we started to get our tackle fixed up, while Pat told us of the great size of the Lough Rusky trout, "the finest trout in Ireland."

A fine day towards the end of May in the West of Ireland is wonderfully pleasant, and even if I had not had good sport I was prepared to be quite content with the scenery. Lough Rusky is about eight miles long, with a breadth at one point of three and a half miles, and the hotel stands on the southern shore within a stone's-throw of the lake, a square house set down in the midst of rocks, heather, and gorse. The east shore is uninteresting, but the west most beautiful: high headlands clad in bracken and gorse, while at many points there are thick

woods of small oak, birch, and hazel, probably self-sown. And dotted over all the south-west corner of the lake are numerous small islands, some of them nothing but piles of granite rocks, and others clad with the same queer little trees.

Of the many different flies to be seen in early summertime on the lakes in the centre and West of Ireland none surpass the greendrake for grace and beauty; and a really big rise of may-fly is a sight once seen never to be forgotten.

On most of the large lakes in this part of the country there are to be found shallows, called "corrigeens," the bottoms of which are largely formed of that pale, gritty, sandy detritus in which the larvæ of the may-fly love to burrow. The eggs of the may-fly, when first laid on the surface of the water, sink to these sandy bottoms, where they remain until hatched into larvæ, which at once start to burrow, and the colder the weather at the time the deeper they go. And here they stay until the following summer, when the rising temperature hatches them out into may-flies.

Most things in Ireland are pretty uncertain, and the time of the rise of may-fly is no exception. A cold or warm spring seems to be the chief factor governing the time of the rise, which may occur at any period from the middle of May to the second week in June.

On the famous dapping lakes in the centre of the country the rise generally lasts for about two or three weeks, while on the lakes farther west it lasts as long as six weeks. Most likely there is a greater uniformity of depth in the former lakes, with the result that the fly all hatch out practically together; while in the western lakes, where the depth varies greatly, the rise will correspond to the different depths, and so is prolonged.

The life of a may-fly is from twenty-four to thirty-six hours. And though this may seem short, one wonders how any may-fly can live even so long with every hand against it. From the minute it starts to ascend from its birthplace to the surface of the water until it rises into the air, every trout in the lake is on the alert to swallow it; and the instant the fly flutters into the summer air every bird, from a gull to a wren, is watching and waiting for it.

On a western lake, when the fly are rising freely, all the small birds of the countryside seem to collect on the lee shore of the lake and every island, and you will see them flying from thorn-bush to whin-bush, gobbling up the fly as fast as they can. On one small island alone you will see chaffinches, tits, wagtails, buntings, whinchats, and wrens, all hardly able to fly, so stuffed are they with may-fly—and with their heads in the air like cormorants trying to swallow an extra large eel, while the legs and wings of

the fly stick out at each side of the beak like whiskers.

On many Irish lakes the mayfly season is the only period during the year when the trout will rise to the surface to take a fly, and on practically all the big lakes the only time when large trout can be caught at all except by trolling.

The earlier in the season the rise comes the better the fishing will be. When the fly comes up early, but few of them appear during the first week or so, unless the weather is unusually warm, and these stragglers seem to have an irresistible attraction for the big trout. In late seasons the fly are so numerous from the beginning of the rise that the trout are soon gorged, become quickly dainty, and therefore rise badly.

When we started there was a strong west wind blowing, with the result that the fly as they rose in the different parts of the lake were blown towards the east shore, and here the air was white with gulls hawking ceaselessly after the swarms of may-fly.

The two boatmen, Con and Terry Walsh, first rowed to an island in the south-east corner of the lake, where, by the aid of butterfly-nets, they quickly caught and carefully placed in a specially made wicker-basket sufficient fly to last us for the day.

Dapping is an art peculiar in itself, and once mastered is not particularly difficult except in rough water, when great care is required to keep the fly from being drowned. The ignorant and simple angler, on demanding a dapping-rod from a tackle shop, will find himself presented with a twenty-foot rod resembling the mast of a fishing smack, which he will use for possibly half an hour. After that he will, according to his nationality, either break it in as many pieces as he can, or else endeavour to sell it to a friend greener and simpler than himself. A light fourteen-foot grilse rod when the breeze is very light, and a twelve-foot trout rod when strong, are the handiest ones to use. Apart from the fatigue of holding up a twenty-foot pole for hours, it is nearly impossible to play or bring to the net a wild trout with such a weapon. Two blow lines are necessary: one of plaited silk for use in a strong wind, and one of the lightest and airiest gossamer floss silk to keep the fly well away from the boat when the breeze is of the lightest. At the end of the blow line, which is spliced to the reel line, is attached two feet of the finest gut. And the reel check must be smooth and light in order to play without breaking a wild five- to eight-pound trout on such fine tackle.

There is a wonderful fascination in watching the may-fly just barely tipping the water. Suddenly the water breaks slightly—sometimes in heavy water you miss it,—the fly disappears, you strike at the right moment, and in a flash the

line tightens and you are battling with the first mad rush of a heavy trout in the pink of condition.

Quickly I forgot everything in the world, my whole mind centred in the greendrake dancing and tripping over the waves, always expecting it silently and slowly to disappear. Towards evening the rise went off, and we made our way back to the hotel with a fine basket of two dozen beautiful trout, ranging from a pound and three-quarters to seven and a half, not a small trout amongst them.

The following morning came a wire from Robert, saying that there was a grand flood and that the grilse were landed, and we were not long taking the road for home.

IX.

Charles drove slowly and carefully until we got to Eastport, where a sudden spurt and an extra bad pothole put Lizzie's back axle out of action, and we had to leave her there to be repaired. We managed to squeeze into a small hired car, and got home without further mishap in torrents of rain.

There was the usual full parade of servants to welcome us, except Porgeen, who was in bed with an accumulation of small pains. Robert was dancing with excitement at the prospect of good grilse fishing, and told us that they were falling over each other trying to get up the Glenowen river, and that we must be ready to start fishing the instant the flood cleared.

I told Patsey to give the car driver a meal, and a good glass of whisky afterwards to keep the cold out, to be informed that devil a drop of whisky or poteen was there in the house: that old snake of a Porgeen had it all scoffed. In fact, there was nothing left except Master Charles's Benedictine and Miss Mary's lemonade crystals. It would be a sin to give grand stuff like Benedictine to an ignorant motey man; but as no one had ever been known to leave the house without his fill of whisky, or maybe poteen, he would have to give him the Benedictine.

Shortly afterwards I heard Patsey and the driver go into the dining-room, and Patsey's explanation of the unpardonable absence of whisky and poteen, followed by, "But did ye ever taste Benedictine, Pat? 'Tis made by the holy monks." Then through the half-open door I saw Pat swill off a liqueur glass of Charles's best Benedictine. After contemplating the empty glass for some time, he said to Patsey, "That's gran' stuff; God bless the holy monks whatever, but to hell with the man that blew that glass for shortness of

breath." And Patsey had to give him two more glasses before he was satisfied and would start for Eastport.

So fine was the next morning that you would never imagine it could rain at all in the country, and after an early breakfast we set off for the Glenowen river with Robert and Jack in attendance. And as the wind was straight downstream we settled each to take one bank.

The Glenowen river was of quite a different type to the Duffmore: broader, shorter, and not nearly so rapid, it resembled more a river running through flat country. And draining two large lakes, it had the additional advantage of keeping up to fishing level for a much longer time.

When Robert and I reached the river bank, we found the water was still too thick for fishing, and after picking out a dry spot under a sheltering bank, we sat down to wait and smoke.

After about ten minutes Robert drew my attention to the opposite bank of the river, which was honeycombed with rabbit-holes. At first I only saw about half a dozen rabbits, apparently carrying on in the way rabbits usually do. But when I watched closely, I saw that the numbers were increasing rapidly; not a second passed but a rabbit came stealthily out of a hole, crept forward a few feet, and then crouched as still as a log. And Robert pointed out to me that all their heads were turned towards one hole in the centre of the burrow at the top of the bank.

At last they ceased to come out, and for several minutes nothing happened, but not a rabbit moved. Then suddenly out darted a single rabbit, as Robert said, as though the devil had him by the tail, its ears flat on its back, to run round frantically in a circle twice, and finally to subside in a heap in the middle of its companions. Again for some minutes nothing happened, and I began to think that every rabbit in the burrow had gone mad. A gentle nudge from Robert, and my eye caught something moving out of the centre hole. It moved a little more, to send a perceptible quiver through the crouching rabbits, and I saw that it was the wicked little head of a weasel, its eyes on fire. Another pause, and the weasel started to draw himself slowly out of the hole in a careless fashion, as though he had only been paying a call and was now on his way home.

Twice the rabbit in the centre of the circle made a wild bound, to send an answering uneasy shudder through its hypnotised brothers and sisters; each time the weasel stood stock-still with a foreleg held up in the air, and its victim at once collapsed into a heap again.

Slowly the weasel began to draw near its unfortunate victim, but when it got within three feet the rabbit gathered

itself together preparatory to taking flight should its enemy approach any nearer. The weasel stood as though turned to stone, and then began to dance, pirouette, and turn somersaults round and round the rabbit, which gradually sank back on its haunches, and followed every movement of the now apparently mad weasel.

Round and round went that wicked little weasel in an ever-narrowing circle, and above two larks nearly burst their throats with their glorious music, like an orchestra at an evil melodrama.

I could stand it no longer, and let a roar at that devilish weasel, which at once stopped its horrible death-dance and turned towards the direction from which the sound came, every hair on its body bristling with rage. But not a rabbit moved, and the dance started once more.

At last the end came: the weasel danced itself within springing range, turned a last mad somersault, and lit like a flash on the rabbit's neck, its teeth deep into the skull of its nearly senseless victim. Before it died the rabbit gave one piteous screech, and, the spell broken, every rabbit shot down its own particular hole.

Robert pronounced the water fit to fish, and I was thankful to get to work. The river was about ten miles long, but the first two miles below the lake were no use, being shallow and fast running and not holding fish. In order that we should not be fishing the same pool together, it had been settled that Charles should start at the highest one, while I was to begin two pools below him.

Robert was a great believer in silver and blue for fresh-run grilse, and I mounted a "Silver Doctor" for a tail-fly and a "Blue Doctor" for a dropper. I found several of the pools very hard to fish owing to the strange vagaries of the stream, which would cross from bank to bank several times in one pool. And it was only by casting well below me that I could keep decently straight at all.

Like so many Irish fishermen, Robert fished for salmon in the same way as for trout, keeping the tail-fly near the surface, the dropper bobbing on the top of the water, and working rod and line at a great pace. He would never agree with my theory that spring fish lay deeper in a pool than grilse, and were consequently much harder to move, and that the deeper you put the fly down to them the better chance you had of rising them.

We did not rise a fish in the first pool, nor did we see one move, and Robert blamed that dirty little weasel. But first cast at the next pool I had a sly drag in mid-stream. Robert wanted me to sit down quiet and easy and smoke a pipe before I tried the fish again; but instead I put up a fly two sizes smaller, and at the next

cast stuck in a good grilse, which darted off down-stream in a succession of what Robert called standing leaps; and the fish must have been well hooked as he had slack line quite half a dozen times. At the end of the pool the fish steadied himself in the middle of the current, stood on his head, and strove hard to get rid of the fly by hitting the casting line with his tail. Whereupon Robert got very excited, and started stoning him as fast as he could pick up and throw. At last he must have made a good shot, as the grilse suddenly darted up the river like a shot out of a gun, to turn two splendid somersaults clean out of the water, and then remain quite still. After that I had no difficulty in guiding him into slack water at our feet, where Robert slipped the net under and landed a silvery grilse of six and three-quarter pounds with sea-lice still on him.

Directly afterwards I lost another grilse in the same pool — a mad fish which was more out of the water than in while I had it on. Fresh-run grilse, if they jump much, which they generally do, are very difficult to kill, owing to the softness of their mouths when just out of the sea. A stiff rod and reel with a strong check are fatal; your only chance is with a softish rod, and reel check light and smooth.

I found Robert's knowledge of the river invaluable. Here the fish would lie right under the very bank at our feet, there on the edge of the stream on the far side, and one had to drop the fly almost on the opposite bank to cover the fish properly. In one pool there were always grilse behind a certain large rock in the middle of the river, and the fly must be cast straight down over this rock to fall behind it at the end of a tight and straight line, and kept there gently twitching if a fish was to be risen at all. If cast in the usual way at an angle of 45°, by the time the fly reached the lie of the fish the line would be in a series of curves, and the fly, as Robert described it, in a ball.

While eating our lunch on the bank of the river a tiny bare-legged girl passed, carrying a basket, and stopped to admire the five grilse we had caught laid out in a row on the grass. After a minute, Robert, who was always full of curiosity and mischief, asked her in a coaxing tone, "Phat have ye in the basket, agra?" The child looked from Robert to me, and answered, "Phat's that to ye?" Robert, in a tone of mock surprise, "Oh, will ye listen to the child. Come, now, tell the gintleman phat ye have in that grand basket." And like a flash the child answered, "I will not; would yerself tell phat any fool asked ye?" and clutching her basket tight, she ran away as fast as her little legs would carry her, leaving Robert for once in his life without an answer.

After lunch we did no good until we reached an unusually large pool, and here the sport was fast and furious, every cast in one part of the pool moving a fish. One grilse, which after being hooked never showed once but zigzagged across the river at lightning speed, must have failed to observe the rule of the river and bumped into several of his friends, as his course was marked by alarmed grilse jumping madly out of his way in their headlong flight up the pool. We killed him, and I thought that he would be the last fish to rise in that pool, but the very next cast I was into another, only to lose him at the second wild jump. Hardly was he gone when Robert drew my attention to an otter swimming up the middle of the pool just below the surface and making a peculiar wake: splitting the water was Robert's description, and a perfect one. After that we neither moved nor saw another fish in that pool.

Charles and Jack caught us up at the last pool, and there was great excitement when it was discovered that we each had eleven grilse; and as I had been the leading rod so far, Charles was given the honour. It was now getting late and the sun fast sinking, while the wind had nearly died away; but the water was broken in many places by the boils from salmon-pits and big submerged rocks.

Charles wasted no time, but started off at once casting in his usual mechanical way, every cast at an exact angle of 45° across the river, and fished out in the same manner and at the same pace; while behind him crouched Jack, eager to stick his great gaff into the twelfth fish and defeat us.

When Charles had got well ahead I was on the point of starting, when I heard a hoarse whisper from Robert, "Whist, take yer time. Put up the biggest fly in the box, drop her into yonder grand boil, and be after kaping her there." And the cunning Robert was right; for after putting up the biggest fly I had, and keeping it working in the grand boil for about half a minute, I felt a tug, and the scream of the reel was drowned by Robert's yells of triumph.

Charles did not even turn his head, and went on fishing for all he was worth; but Jack started to hop up and down the bank, and Robert declared afterwards that he could hear him grinding his teeth from the agony of his rage.

But Robert's triumph was short-lived; a wild shout from Jack told us that Charles had met a fish, and the excitement all round rose to fever heat. Twice Charles's fish came perilously near to mine, and even the polite Robert could not help saying, "Now, Master Charles, fair-play's a jewel." But Charles said nothing, his whole attention centred on get-

ting that twelfth fish on the bank before mine. By now both Robert and Jack were half in the river with gaffs stretched out, waiting for a chance to drive them home.

Suddenly a curse from Charles, the first and last word he spoke, and I saw his rod straighten; Jack had missed the fish and cut his line. And the infuriated Jack promptly started to wade out into the river after the fish, to be caught and pulled back by Charles, and then sit down on the bank and burst into tears, while Charles stood grimly by and nobody uttered a sound.

For some minutes my fish had remained ominously quiet, and thinking that Robert might get a chance with his gaff before the fish woke up again, I shortened up the line and began to guide him in towards the bank. One tremendous jump, and fish and fly were gone, and Jack's tears quickly changed to laughter.

Back to the head of the pool we went. I tossed up a coin, and Charles winning, he started off fishing once more. In the meantime Robert had produced a cast like a cart-rope and a huge white fly, and attached them to my reel-line.

By now it was nearly dark, and at times I could only locate Charles by the swish of his rod. We had nearly reached the end of the pool when a shout from Jack told us that Charles must be in a fish, and the next cast my rod was nearly snatched out of my hands, and I guessed that I must be in a spring fish. As bad luck would have it, Charles's fish insisted on going up-stream close to the bank at my feet, while mine bolted straight for the sea, making white water. I tried hard to hold him, and must have nearly dragged him out of the water, for he churned it up like the screw of a steamer; but he was too strong for me, and when the rod began to give out warnings and cracks, I had to give him line.

Something had to go, and of course it was Charles's light cast, unequal to a tug-of-war with my cart-rope, and we could see the top of his rod fly straight against the sky. Jack now literally howled with rage, and threatened me with every penalty he had ever heard of, including the wrath of the Resident Magistrate the following Tuesday. But the end was not yet, and even Jack became silent with astonishment when two fish, a large springer and a grilse, jumped close together in mid-stream, showing up like two flashes of phosphorescent silver against the black water.

After this both fish kept quiet, though at times I could feel a light and a heavy tug on the line; and winding up as fast as I could, I gripped the line and dragged the fish towards the spot where I could hear Robert splashing in the river and breathing heavily.

Probably they were not the

first fish Robert had gaffed in the dark, and how he did it I could not see, but in two shots he had both fish out and on the bank. Luckily he met Charles's grilse first, and his cast, which was wound round mine and held by the two droppers, having fouled each other, at once snapped.

The excitement over, I felt horribly tired and hungry, and was thankful to get on to the outside car waiting for us as soon as Charles and Jack had crossed the river by boat at the mouth.

The drive back along the shore of the bay, though short, was wonderful. The sea was quite calm, and looked like burnished silver tinged with a faint blue. On each side towered the mountains, black where they met the sea, then blackish purple, and at the top the last rays of light made the rocks show up like dull steel. We heard several snipe, crossing from our side to feed in some marsh in the opposite mountains, and from the shore came the wild call of curlew and the plaintive cry of redshanks.

Jack never spoke during the drive, and he confided to Robert afterwards that he was in great dread of me, as it was quite certain that I must have paid at least £4 to the devil himself for an amulet. "Why?" asked Robert. "Every why," replied Jack; "'faith, he couldn't lose a fish if he wanted to."

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE "TREATY" RATIFIED—ENGLAND STILL THE ENEMY—THE "DAMNABLE HYPOCRISY" OF OATHS — THE EFFECT OF THE "TREATY" UPON GREAT BRITAIN — LORD BIRKENHEAD'S DESTRUCTIVE POLICY—LABOUR — THE GIANT WITH THE FEET OF CLAY—NATIONALISM OR INTERNATIONALISM?

THE ratification of Mr Lloyd George's monstrous "treaty" by the Sinn Feiners was not a legitimate excuse for much rejoicing. Even our Ministers were tired of exchanging compliments, and can have found little satisfaction in the proceedings of Dail Eireann. For a solid month this Irish assembly, such as it is, was torn between farce and melodrama. If the members gave us then a fair specimen of their capacity for affairs, South and West Ireland are destined to be overwhelmed by a merciless torrent of words. Now and again the disputants reached a high level of comedy, as when the crowning insult was flung at Michael Collins that he had not committed so many murders as had been put to his credit, or when Griffith, whose name suggests a Welsh origin, denounced a dear colleague as a "damned Englishman." And out of it all emerged one solid fact, which is that the boon offered by Mr Lloyd George to Sinn Fein with so fine an exultation is accepted by Sinn Fein with insult and contumely. Sinn Fein has not only looked the gift-horse in the mouth, but decided merely by a majority of seven not to kick it out of the stable. Throughout the debate it was evident that England was still the enemy, and the foolish sentimentalists, who pretend to think that a "union of hearts" would be the natural consequence of a disunion of the kingdom, were speedily disappointed.

In the first place, the Sinn Feiners have ratified the "treaty" under protest. Not even those who signed it in London accept it with pride or willingness. Like the true blackmailers that they are, they take the instalment for what it is worth. When Mr Boland asked whether this was "in their opinion a final settlement of the question between England and Ireland," Michael Collins replied, "It is not." And if there are any Englishmen simple enough to believe that there is any value in the oath, vague and ungrammatical, which was concocted in Downing Street to humour the susceptibilities of Sinn Fein, Griffith hastened to disabuse them. He gave a pleasant little dissertation on oaths as they are understood in Dublin, which we commend to that eminent "Unionist," Mr Austen Chamberlain. "In that assembly,"

said Griffith, "were men who had taken oath after oath to the King of England, and he noticed that they laughed loudly when insulting references were made to young soldiers there on account of the oath." What, then, if these men have taken oath after oath to the King of England, becomes of the many centuries of "nationhood and independence," of which we have heard so much? "He had seven different oaths," went on Griffith, "which were taken by different members to His Majesty and gentlemen who sat on the English bench, and these were the men who were going to vote against the treaty because they would not have an oath. This hypocrisy, which was going to involve the lives of gallant young men, was damnable." We agree with Griffith that it is "damnable hypocrisy" to expect a Sinn Feiner to keep an oath, that the well-drilled consciences, which have managed to take seven oaths, need not boggle at an eighth. But remember that the eighth will have precisely the same value as the others, for Sinn Fein believes devoutly in the famous line of Euripides: "The tongue has sworn; the mind is unbound by the oath."

In the second place, Southern Ireland, since the ratification, remains of the same divided opinion as before the ratification. Valera is still the leader of the irreconcilables, and he is not likely to cease from agitating. He will transfer his hatred from England to Michael Collins, and things will go on very much as they went before. There will be but one difference: the gunmen will perforce, when the English soldiers are withdrawn, lavish their attentions upon their own countrymen. That is something to the good, but it will not ensure to Southern Ireland a time of peace and prosperity. Such is the bitter tragedy in which Mr Lloyd George and his obedient "Unionists" have involved the South and West of Ireland; such is the noisy disordered parlour into which Ulster, poor fly, has been invited, that Sinn Fein, the spider, might devour her at its ease.

But let us for a moment turn our eyes from Ireland, and consider what will be the effect of the monstrous "treaty" upon Great Britain. That we know is a very difficult task for an English politician to accomplish. It is always a far showier policy, so the British Radical thinks, to give away what you hold in trust for others than to guard that which you have taken an oath to defend. And yet it must be clear to all, save to the fettered henchmen of Mr Lloyd George, that the "treaty," signed in Downing Street on 6th December, inflicts far greater perils upon Great Britain than upon Ireland. If any one doubts it, let him consult the admirable debate held in the House of Lords—a perfect armoury of

facts and arguments. The poor silly guarantees which our statesmen pretend they have exacted from the Irish are not worth the paper on which they are written. The agreement would have been safe only if it had been signed by willing hands on either side. What the English opportunists thought when they put their names to a pitiful surrender is not of the smallest importance. They had floral tributes ready for one another, and that was all that mattered to them. What the Irishmen thought who dictated the agreement is plain for us all to see. They accepted the terms in the same spirit of hate in which they imposed them. They will go on insulting Great Britain, lying about Great Britain, poisoning the minds of Great Britain's enemies until the end of time. There is no change of heart observable in them, no hope of union. As they have lived upon hate in the past, so they will feed fat the ancient grudge they think they bear us in the future. And if ever we are at war again they will be found active on the side of our enemy.

Had the "treaty" been ratified before we went to war with Germany, assuredly we should have been completely, overwhelmingly defeated, and black indeed seem our chances for the future. There is not a word in the agreement which effectively protects our imperial interests. "The first fact that strikes one," said Lord Finlay in a speech of great authority, "on looking at the map, is how interdependent nature has made the two islands of Britain and Ireland. We are dependent upon our sea communications for the existence, not only of our Empire but of Britain itself as a great nation. Ireland is within a few miles of our shores. Its situation is such that from Irish creeks and ports might be commanded all our great trade routes, and it is now proposed under this agreement to give to Ireland what Canada has—a virtual independence." But, say the supporters of peace at any price—at the price even of the extinction of the British Empire—the agreement contains safeguards. What are they? Here they are, and it is easy to estimate their worth, even if we do not understand their meaning: "In time of war or of strained relations with a foreign power, such harbour and other facilities as the British Government may require for the purpose of such defence as aforesaid" shall be afforded by the Irish Free State to His Majesty's imperial forces. In the first place, the words "strained relations" stand in need of definition. Who is to tell us or the Irish the precise hour at which we should demand "harbour and other facilities?" And in the second place—and this is of far greater importance—what should we do if the Irish refused us access to

their harbours? This they would do in all probability, since there is not the slightest reason to believe that, having been the spoilt child of the Empire for many years, they will, now or in the future, cease from the inveterate habit of ingratitude. And if we did make an attempt to enter their harbours, what would happen then? We should fail miserably. As Lord Finlay says, "without control of the adjoining territory any control of the ports is useless. It is no use to say you control the ports. Suppose that by any misfortune the feeling in the south and west were as hostile to us during another war as it was during the last war, then to be safe you must have control also of the adjoining territory. Control of the ports without something of that kind is merely illusory, and you hold merely at the goodwill of those who have control of the land." And Southern Ireland will be permitted to have her own army, which can be used only against Ulster or against Great Britain.

Thus the agreement, improperly described as between Ireland and Great Britain, must necessarily endanger the British Empire. We are already appreciably weaker when we confront foreign nations. Henceforth we shall fight with one arm tied behind our back, and consequently shall speak with less authority than heretofore in the councils of Europe. We have surrendered to the bomb and the revolver, and there is not an enemy of ours in the world who does not know it. At home, as abroad, the action of Mr Lloyd George and the gang of white slaves which surrounds him have done Great Britain an irreparable injury. The craft of politics did not stand very high in the public esteem before this last act of treachery. We had been told by a statesman, whose long service might have justified a higher ideal, that in politics there is no such thing as principle. We had heard opportunism extolled as wisdom and virtue by demagogues, who felt their quarter's cheque crackling in their pockets. But never before had we heard a member of the Cabinet denouncing bitterly his friends and supporters of yesterday because they did not undergo the convenient and sudden conversion which overcame the whole body of ministers in a single night. After this the trade of politics is openly exposed for the trickery that it is. Hear what Lord Carson said: "The truth of the matter is, that if you go on like this, if you have men in high positions stating to-day that A is white, and to-morrow arguing that it is certainly black, you will destroy the confidence of the democracy of this country in its rulers and in its institutions. I believe that is what has happened in this case, and it will make public life stink in the nostrils of the country for the

next twenty years." There is soon to be a General Election, we are told. Does the Government believe that it will persuade men and women to register their votes when they know that even if they elect their candidate he will think it no disgrace to change his expressed opinions as soon as Parliament meets?

And in one other way this illicit making of an agreement with men not authorised to confer has struck a heavy blow at the government of the country. The once United Kingdom has been broken in pieces, not only without consulting the people, but surreptitiously behind the back of Parliament. When the earlier Home Rule Bills were being discussed, the issue was placed frankly and openly before the country at a General Election. This proposal, which goes far beyond the wildest schemes devised by Mr Gladstone and his successors, is thrown at the public's head to take or leave, without the alteration of a comma. In brief, as Lord Sumner says, "the Home Rule question is to be settled not directly by Parliament in Parliament, but at No. 10 Downing Street, by Ministers, who are then to present a *fait accompli* to Parliament, and say, 'There it is, in the lump, take it or leave it; dishonour the pledge we have given in your name, dishonour our signatures to this document and take the responsibility; or approve, ratify, and confirm this, and then in February we will tell you about the details.'" It is a new method of government which, if it be followed, will substitute for the limited monarchy, which once was our pride, an uncontrolled and unscrupulous dictatorship.

Nor is this the worst. There is another constitutional point upon which Lord Sumner enlarged. "Does anybody seriously contend," he asked, "that the way in which this matter has come about, and the way in which it has been presented to Parliament at last, is anything but a breach in every constitutional usage that we have known as long as we have read Parliamentary history? It is not so wide as a church door, but it will serve. I doubt very much whether the authority of the legislature will recover the shock which this treatment inflicts upon it. The relations of one part of His Majesty's United Kingdom with another are not, whatever else they are, relations between a foreign State and this country. They are not relations between a self-governing dominion and this country. Constitutionally, since 1800, Ireland has been as much an integral part of the United Kingdom until last year as Wales or the Isle of Wight, and therefore those relations are not such as can be left to the Executive to determine in conclave with foreign representatives, and then to present to Parliament, either with a statement that this is what has been arranged or for

the passing of the legislation to give effect to it." That is clear enough nor can it be gainsaid, and the situation does not seem more honourable to us as an Empire if we remember that our constitutional usage has been violated merely to pretend, what is manifestly untrue, that Ireland has always been a separate nation, and has never admitted allegiance to the British Crown.

Yet the Lord Chancellor implies that the act of disruption, of which he is the champion, is an act of "constructive statecraft." At least he imputes it as an offence to his opponents that they are lacking in "constructive statecraft," whence we may infer that he believes himself abounding in this grace. Constructive statecraft! Why, there was never devised a more grimly destructive proposal than that which has been ratified by the British Parliament. Destruction is written large in every clause, in every line of it. How many human lives it will be the means of destroying we shall know presently. This is a point of small interest, we suppose, to the Lord Chancellor and his master, Mr Lloyd George, who, after the unavenged butchery of Mrs Lindsay and the glorification of Mike Collins, are not likely to feel the crime of murder very acutely. It has already destroyed many other things than human lives. It has destroyed the last remnants of faith which this bemused country has had in parliamentary government. It has destroyed the United Kingdom. It has destroyed the constitution of Great Britain. It has left us nothing in exchange but the privilege of being governed by Mr Lloyd George and his Lord Chancellor. And the Lord Chancellor has the effrontery to speak of "constructive statecraft." How easily do men deceive themselves when they empty their minds of scruple and a sense of humour!

It is, indeed, only Lord Carson and those with him who have formulated a constructive policy. They would, if they could, restore justice to an outraged world. They would, if they could, overcome an evil precedent, and see to it that law and order were once again respected. Time was when these elementary virtues—justice, law, and order—were taken for granted. Our present rulers have permitted them to lapse, and there is now no higher form of "constructive statecraft" than to bring back some respect for the decalogue and the decencies of life.

But at last the servile party, which still persists, impudently, in calling itself "Unionist," has dared to assert itself. The worm has turned. It has gladly followed Mr Lloyd George as far as the dismemberment of the Empire. It will not readily submit to a General Election. Thus does it swallow camels and strain at gnats. For our part, we are indifferent as to when

and why and how the next election shall come. Our hearts would not break if it never came again under the humiliating conditions of servitude which now prevail. Are we to be tricked and betrayed once more? Are we still to tolerate the apostles of disruption, led by Mr Austen Chamberlain, when they dare to call themselves "Unionists," in the very act of breaking up the Empire? What guarantee have we that they will not, at the bidding of Mr Lloyd George, throw India and Egypt into the pot where Ireland lies seething? If this country is to return to sanity and honest dealing, there is but one hope: we must call into being a party of loyal and honourable Tories; we must discard the name "Unionist" altogether, a name which has lost its meaning, and retains only evil associations; we must exclude from the party Mr Austen Chamberlain, Lord Birkenhead, and all those who have betrayed their cause and its supporters. If they prefer to accept our enemies as their friends, let them join the Radicals, whose opinions, well known and openly expressed, they share. And when we have carried out this policy of "purge," we may be a small party, but we shall be a party which trusts its leaders, because it is assured that they will not betray the cause entrusted to their hands. The duty of the party will be simple: to walk in the old ways, and be true to the ancient traditions of our country and our Empire. We want to rid ourselves of "stunts" and disturbances, to put down Government by scandal and by surrender, to give the country a period of freedom from legislation, to restore the forgotten doctrine that it is a Government's business to govern, and to scrutinise the expenditure and administration of the country. But if we are to accomplish this we must first rid ourselves of all those who, we believe, have betrayed their trust.

And if for a moment we forget the mockery of Parliament, we see clearly that there is one very good reason why Mr Lloyd George and his friends should remain where they are until they have extricated the country from the Irish entanglement. The crisis is not past because a set of sanguine and reckless gamblers have exchanged congratulatory telegrams with one another, and have bound evergreens round their heads. Somehow or other the union between Ireland and Great Britain must be dissolved in proper form. The Act of 1920 must be repealed; a provisional Government must be set up in Dublin; and some attempt must be made to understand the monstrous document which Mr Lloyd George has called a treaty. Now these hopeless works can be tackled only by their begetters. And before Mr Lloyd George goes through the farce of appealing to the country he must set his

slaves to work, and start the Sinn Feiners on the ill-omened business of coercing one another. When that has been done, let us hope that they who, in a kingdom which they have disunited, persist in calling themselves "Unionists" (though they do not explain which or what "union" they favour, unless it be the workhouse), will find their proper place among their true friends, and leave it to those few Tories, who remain, to plead their own cause in the country, and if they be returned, to defend the kingdom and the Empire against unauthorised and treacherous attacks. It is time to break old and shifty alliances, and to get back to the truth. "I was in earnest," said Lord Carson in a memorable passage in a sincere and noble speech. "I was not playing politics. I thought of the last years during which I was fighting with others whose friendship and comradeship I hope I will lose from to-night, because I do not value any friendship that is not founded upon confidence and trust. I was in earnest. What a fool I was!" These words point out the only road by which politicians can righteously travel. Henceforth it is our own fault if, by cherishing false friends, we are betrayed again by those in whom we have trusted, and trusted in vain.

The autocrat of the nineteenth century was the Middle Class, which thought that nothing was necessary to salvation but free trade and "the dissidence of dissent." To buy cheap and sell dear, to impose, in the name of freedom, a harsh and narrow creed upon a reluctant world—these sad projects seemed the only duties of mankind. Never did an autocrat so meanly drab, so insolently indifferent to the good taste and scruple of others, attempt to usurp the sovereignty of the state. And all the while its sense of power, though it did not inspire it to clear thinking, did invest it with an ugly arrogance. The leaders of the Middle Class devoutly believed themselves, in public, as the heirs of all the ages, and woe be to them who dared to throw obstacles in their mistaken road of "progress."

To-day the ancient party of the Middle Class has lost its numbers, which alone gave it reality. It survives only in the scanty followers of Mr Asquith, and would not even boast of this scanty survival if it had not changed the individualism which once was its covering for the gaudier robe of a militant socialism. Thus to-day it is but a subaltern party, a party which waits upon the pleasure of the new tyrant, Labour; and if never again it is permitted to have much influence in the country, it owes its failure to its own selfishness and pusillanimity. But no democracy is ever long without a tyrant. And Labour, "the giant with

the feet of clay," as Mr Shaw Desmond calls it in a luminous work lately published,[1] has taken the place of the Middle Class. It has the same manners, the same insolence, which ensured the doom of its predecessor. It believes that it engrosses the wisdom and virtue of all time. It smiles half-indulgently upon those rash persons who dare to disagree with its doctrines, and condemns them more in sorrow than in anger to the perdition which it reserves for the "blind" and the "ignorant." Its self-complacency has for many years held firm against all attacks. It has moved on easily from class consciousness to an imbecile conviction that no other class than itself exists. And yet all the while it has been the dupe of cunning men. While it has supplied the funds necessary for its enterprises, it has been led almost from the beginning by the very same kind of men who once led the Middle Class to victory. It has always chosen its leaders from that class which it still professes to despise—the *bourgeoisie*. It has taken delight in being bullied and deceived by the prig and the mountebank, and at last, having professed a bitter distaste of politicians, it is dying of a surfeit of politics. Its latest leaders have long ceased to lead. They will gladly follow wherever a casual majority takes them, and they are no more likely to respect principle than the amiable gentlemen who, having given "Unionism" its *coup de grâce*, still insist upon calling themselves "Unionists." When Messrs Clynes and Thomas, unable to stem the tide, were content to drift into "direct action" for the sake of the Red Army, which had no concern with British labour, then we all knew that the game was up.

Mr Shaw Desmond is a bitterly disillusioned man. He has seen the movement, in which he had a simple faith, degenerate into the familiar trickery. He complains justly that from 1880 to 1914 the cause of Labour was a religion. It is to-day a piece of politics, a branch of that opportunism which is destined to be the ruin of the Empire. The machine has grown so greatly in strength that it destroys instantly the poor man who attempts to control it. The champions of Labour differ not at all from the other politicians. Very few of them have ever soiled their manicured fists with toil. They are bankers or lawyers or teachers, just as though they were called Radicals or Tories. Indeed, they differ from their rivals only in name, and they are fighting for the same ends—office and boodle—as are kept steadily before the eyes of their rivals. The Labour movement, in truth, has travelled very far away from its beginnings. It began, as Mr Desmond says, with the soap-box, and with

[1] Labour, the Giant with the Feet of Clay. London: W. Collins Ltd.

that humble contrivance for its platform it gathered about it men who were ready to sacrifice something for an ideal, and who did not believe, as their successors appear to believe, that the purpose of politics is to fill the body and to leave the soul empty.

"Behind our propaganda," says Mr Desmond of the early days, "was the most powerful trinity on earth: feeling and imagination and passion. It was a trinity aimed at the belly in order to reach 'the soul of the crowd.' We at least believed that the path to the soul lay through the stomach." Mr Desmond and his friends are disillusioned now. They have passed through a period of high wages, and they have seen that the workers, when they had money to spare, did not spend it upon the things which they used to say would ensure them "a larger, fuller life." They squandered it all in the purchase of more of those things —beer, tobacco, and the rest— which were their solace in the ancient days of leanness. For this we would not blame them. Every man has the right to spend his wealth as he chooses. Nobody has the right, when a free choice is given him, to complain of others because he himself has not chosen aright. But the "workers" were so much flattered by their interested leaders that they began to believe that they were infallible. Whatever they did seemed right in their eyes, and so they discarded the romantic ideals of the past and took to their hearts a creed of harsh materialism. The working man, says Mr Desmond, votes for the Labour Party not because he thinks of "the down-trodden proletariat"—he doesn't know what the word "proletariat" means—"or because he wants a new heaven on an old earth. He does so because he wants more money for less work." That is the poor ambition kept before him by his leaders, and if by the mere fact that he does less work less money is forthcoming, he thinks that there is a hidden hoard somewhere or other upon which he is free to draw. Truly the ignorance of Labour, which its leaders have done little or nothing to enlighten, is its bitterest curse, and only increased knowledge can bring happiness to the workers or prosperity to the country.

Of late a great change has come over the spirit of the "people," and Mr Shaw Desmond is quick to notice it. "Up to the time of the war," he says, "Demos was still an easy-going sort of fellow, still prepared to do an honest day's work for what was sometimes a dishonest day's wage, who struck not for the fun of the thing, but more or less out of reasoned purpose. But the war changed all that." It did indeed. "Having been taught by his leaders," thus Mr Shaw Desmond goes on, "that the ends of existence were primarily material ends, or rather never having been taught that they were something other, and getting blood on his teeth, he

began to demand not only the blood of the capitalist, but of the country—not always the same thing." The result of this has been to convert the Trade Unions into political organisations. The industrial welfare of the working man is no longer their object. They aim now at political power; they insist that they alone are fit to govern the Empire; and if they cannot get what they think they want — they are never sure what they want— then they demand a general strike, "when all the workers of the country, to a man or woman, are to throw down their tools and hold society to ransom." And they don't even understand, nor will their leaders impart the unpopular truth, that the policy which they believe to be merely murder is suicide also.

So the Trade Unions, as one of their leaders confesses, "have become pompous, bombastic, obsessed with their importance and prosperity, and they are now faced with bankruptcy and utterly impotent." They hanker after power, though they would be wholly incapable of using it if it were placed in their hands. They hold the very narrow creed of Socialism, and, do what they will, they cannot emerge from the conventicle. "The party," says Professor Eucken,[1] "considers itself humanity; it usurps the position that belongs to the whole. In this way the race is divided and rent in a way to which we find a parallel only in the ecclesiastical fanaticism which divides men into believers and unbelievers, and takes no account of anything else. Belief becomes party-belief, a mere confession of faith in the programme of the party. In its narrower circles the movement recognises no right, freedom, truth, or goodwill outside of itself; the others, the 'reactionaries,' have only the opposite. Everything is staked upon a sheer alternative. All compromise and adjustment is rejected; the whole race is divided into friend and foe, worker and drone, proletariat and capitalists. The individual is from early years impregnated with very narrow views, and is taught to regard every problem as solved." It would be a gloomy prospect if there were no signs of reaction, and it is not without significance that the reaction is coming from the ranks of Socialist Labour itself. For which reason we hope that Mr Shaw Desmond's 'Labour' and Mr Appleton's 'What we Want and Where we Are' will find all the readers that they deserve.

Another fault of Socialism, as it is professed by the doctrinaires of Labour, is that it is concerned only with the present. Its supporters think and act as though they had been born into a new world, without habits or traditions. Knowing nothing of the past, they do not understand that everything about them has

[1] Socialism: An Analysis. By Rudolf Eucken. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

been shaped by what has gone before, that even they themselves are unconsciously the servants of the will of the fathers who begat them. And so they set themselves to fight the power and the customs of a thousand years, and cannot but come out worsted in the fray. They substitute for facts an abstract thought, a dream of equality, which "enables quantity to triumph over quality," which is "indifferent to all that is individual, direct, original." Thus, as Professor Eucken writes: "We come back always to the conviction that a real equality can be derived only from spiritual contacts, and that the idea of a naturalist equality is contradictory."

The Labour Party, again, seems to believe that there is a sacredness in a majority, so long as that majority is on the side of Labour. If the majority be against it, then it calls aloud for "direct action," as an unthinking child calls for the moon. But Labour must learn, if it puts its faith in the counting of heads, that whichever side has the majority must be permitted to rule, with the reservation always that the rights of the minority must be jealously guarded. Mr Shaw Desmond has a wise passage in praise of minorities. "Demos will have to be told," says he, "and now, if he is to be saved from himself, that it is the Minority, not the minority of money, but the minority of brain and spirit, which leads to-day, in any sense in which the word has real meaning; and that, despite all transitional stages, it is this Minority which always will lead. That even under the Democratic State the only claim to leadership will be the claim of spiritual aristocracy and spiritual superiority—not merely the claim, but the fact." If only these simple lessons were taught and learned, how much better a place the world would be!

With equal lucidity does Mr Shaw Desmond explain Labour's misunderstanding of nationalism and internationalism. He points out with perfect truth that Labour has no policy on "War," or "Country," or on "Empire." And the reason is plain enough. "It is without such policy," he says, "because it has never learnt to think clearly—perhaps because it has not felt deeply—upon the meaning of nationalism and internationalism. One could forgive it for its lack of science. One cannot forgive it for its lack of intuition." And upon this question of internationalism more nonsense has been talked by the half-baked than upon any other question. We have been told that if only we are "internationalists" wars will cease, poverty will disappear from the earth, and the happiness of another golden age be assured. Idle talk! We cannot become internationalists, even if we would, by chattering about it. We are born with the sound and wise "prejudices" of affection, gratitude, and sympathy—the "preju-

dices" which inspire patriotism —full-grown within us. When the war broke out, the Socialists, who according to prophecy were to refuse to fight and to prate aloud of the brotherhood of man, did nothing of the kind. Like other honest men, they went to the help of their country when it stood in need of them. Nor are we afraid that Englishmen will cease to be English or Frenchmen cease to be French. No man can easily put off the character and temper which he has inherited from his forefathers. Men of other nations may read Shakespeare in translations, if they will, or in his own tongue, if they have mastered it. But he remains our own authentic inheritance, and we shall not "internationalise" him merely because this pedant or that is garrulous about our "brotherhood," which he cannot define. Moreover, if a kind of internationalism came to the world in the remote future, it would grow out of, it would not slay, patriotism. "Men who have no love of country," says Mr Shaw Desmond, "and no patriotism, are of no use in the International Building to come. No man can be Internationalist before he is Nationalist. A man who has not learned the cohesion of country is not likely to learn the greater cohesion of countries." And Labour has gone about pretending that by the stroke of somebody's pen or at the echo of somebody's voice we can all turn about and become the vile thing called "internationalists." But nothing is ever done in a hurry, and men will not be changed to angels or to devils merely by wishing it.

What then will become of us? We shall emerge slowly from this time of trouble—of artificial trouble, much of it, manufactured by ignorant leaders for the confusion of ignorant followers. Nor is it so much a change of policy that we need as a change of heart. "There is no solution for labour unrest," says Mr Shaw Desmond, "beyond the building up of human character," a slow and difficult process. In the meantime we shall do well to understand that Labour's bark is worse than Labour's bite, and that what it chiefly suffers from is ignorance and vanity. "When Demos has climbed to power," says Mr Shaw Desmond, "and sits Gargantuan and enthroned throughout the world, the new democracy will await with the calmness bred of conviction the crashing downwards of the Giant with the Feet of Clay." And the giant will crash, because he has renounced all his ideals, and limits his ambition with the vain hope of less work and more pay.

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